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I. PORTRAIT STATUE OF THOTHMES III, CAIRO MUSEUM.

A Century of Excavation in the Land of the Pharaohs

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ILLUSTRATED WITH 32 PLATES
SPECIALLY PREPARED FOR THIS VOLUME

Fleming H. Revell Company
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A Century of Excavation in the Land of the Pharaohs

BY

JAMES BAIKIE, F.R.A.S.

AUTHOR OF "WONDER TALES OF THE ANCIENT WORLD"
LANDS AND PEOPLE OF THE BIBLE," "THE SEA KINGS OF CRETE"
"THE STORY OF THE PHARAOHS," ETC.

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PREFACE

IT is somewhat remarkable that, in spite of the considerable, if spasmodic, interest which is taken in the results of research in Egypt, no adequate account of the work of excavation has ever been written. The student who wishes to learn how, when, and where the facts and objects which interest him were discovered, has himself to excavate the desired information from the innumerable volumes of reports issued by the various exploration societies. It is much to be desired that someone who is master of the subject, and preferably, someone who has had actual experience of the work of excavation, should tell the story, not in a manner suited only to the ears of experts, but so that the educated public on whom in the long run excavation must depend for its resources, could appreciate and enjoy a narrative which ought to be as fascinating as any story of search for buried treasure.

This volume makes no pretension to the discharge of such a task. All that it attempts to do is to outline the story of certain aspects of the great work which has given us back so many of the wonders of the ancient civilisation of Egypt. Its omissions are, doubtless, many; but two will be at once conspicuous to anyone who has the slightest acquaintance with the subject. Nothing is said of the Search for the Cities, which in the

closing years of the nineteenth century created so much interest, and resulted in so many identifications of sites; and nothing is said of the great work of Papyrus-hunting which has added so much to our knowledge of ancient life. These two matters were left untouched for reasons which seemed valid. In the case of the Cities, many of the identifications of the 'nineties are at present being questioned, and it seemed better to leave the matter till something like agreement is reached. In the case of the Papyri, the subject has become so specialised, and has developed so large a literature of its own as to render impossible any attempt to deal with it, on the scale which it deserves, in such a volume as the present.

It may be that at some time in the not far distant future, when controversy has resulted in more or less general agreement as to the sites, these two aspects of Egyptian excavation may be dealt with in a volume which may be a sequel and companion to this. My indebtedness to many authorities is manifest on almost every page of the book; but I wish specially to acknowledge my debt to Professor Sir W. M. Flinders Petrie, D.C.L., F.R.S., not only for the kindness which has allowed me to use the material of several of the plates in the book (7, 9, 10), but also for the constant inspiration and stimulus which his work has given to me, as to so many other students of the wonderful civilisation of Ancient Egypt.

JAMES BAIKIE.

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A CENTURY OF EXCAVATION IN THE LAND OF THE PHARAOHS

CHAPTER I

THE STORY OF THE PIONEERS

THE story of the beginnings of research into the wonders of antiquity in Egypt is unique in at least one point. In no other land does a conquering army march at the head of the pioneers of exploration; but the true beginnings of the century and a quarter of research which has given to us so many wonders from the Land of the Nile are to be found with that amazing troop of learned camp-followers who accompanied Napoleon's army on the expedition of 1798. The wonders of ancient Egypt had never altogether been blotted from the memory and the interest of man, as was the case with some of the other lands of the Classic East. The pages of Herodotus, never fuller or more vivid than when he is dealing with Egypt, prevented that oblivion; and therefore Herodotus has some right to be named at the very beginning of the story of the exploration of ancient Egypt

as the pioneer of pioneers. But the world was first really awakened to the richness of the Treasury of Egypt by the colossal production, twelve volumes of plates and twenty-four of text, which was the result of the untiring labours of Vivant Denon and his collaborators—the famous *Description de l'Egypte*—a work almost comparable in scale and grandeur with the monuments which it described. Few armies have left behind them such a memorial of their passage across a land—the more credit to the man whose inexhaustibly fertile brain conceived the idea of making even war subserve the interests of science.

Unfortunately, however, the tie with international strifes and jealousies, which had drawn the French savants originally to the Nile Valley, remained unbroken for many years; and questions of archæology were continually complicated by questions of national pride and prestige, so that the early story of Egyptian exploration is not the story of pure research, conducted for the love of truth and of antiquity, but very often merely the story of how the representative of France strove with the representative of Britain or Italy for the possession of some ancient monument whose capture might bring glory to his nation, or profit to his own purse. There are few more melancholy chapters in the story of human frailty than those in which the early explorers of Egypt (if you can dignify them by such a name) describe how they wrangled and intrigued, lied and cheated, over relics whose mutilated antiquity might have

taught them enough of the vanity of human wishes to make them ashamed of their pettiness.

Dr. Macalister has told us in the Cambridge Ancient History that " it is impossible to give any complete survey of the history of Egyptian excavation." This is true for the later period, because the field is so vast, and the workers are so many ; it is not less true for the beginnings, because it is impossible to write a history of the scufflings of kites and crows—or rather, one might say, of ghouls. It must be almost a nightmare to the modern excavator, with his ingrained appreciation of the importance of even the very smallest object which may add to the knowledge of ancient lands and peoples, to think of the priceless material which was destroyed by the undiscriminating zeal of men like Belzoni, Drovetti, and their fellows, or if not destroyed, at least deprived of half its value by being torn from its historical place and connection. These were the lamentable days when interest in the antiquities of Egypt had advanced but little beyond that displayed by the gentleman of Addison's first *Spectator*, whose Egyptian researches are thus described by himself—" I made a voyage to Grand Cairo on purpose to take the measure of a pyramid ; and as soon as I had set myself right in that particular, returned to my native country with great satisfaction," or by Lord Charlemont, who according to Johnson had nothing to tell of his travels except a story of a large serpent which he had seen in one of the pyramids of Egypt.

In the early years of the nineteenth century,

and, indeed, till Mariette in 1858 laid his masterful hand upon the key of the great treasure-house and allowed no one to spoil it but himself, there was a perfect orgy of spoliation carried on, not in the interests of science, but partly out of vanity, and partly out of greed. Every important or noble traveller had to add a few curios from Egypt to his miscellaneous collection gathered from half a dozen other lands, and sculptures, inscriptions, and papyri of the greatest value were thus uselessly dispersed in paltry private collections, where, when they had gratified a passing curiosity or ministered to a momentary spirit of emulation, they were allowed to gather dust through years of neglect, till at last the futile cabinet of curios was dispersed, and its items were lost sight of altogether.

Some collections, such as those of Belzoni, Passalacqua, Drovetti, and a few others, had better fortune, and were finally purchased for one or other of the great European Museums, which nearly all formed the nucleus of their Egyptological collections in this fashion; but the amount of unnecessary loss of what can never now be replaced must have been deplorable.

This "unbridled pillage," as Maspero justly calls it, in which the consuls of the various European powers played an ignoble but doubtless lucrative part, lasted for more than thirty years, in spite of the protests of men like Champollion, who could understand the irreparable loss which was being inflicted on the infant science of Egyptology by this mutilation and confounding of the documents on which its future depended.

2. WALL OF CHAMBER, TOMB OF SETY I, VALLEY OF THE KINGS.

Among its practitioners were one or two men who were distinguished from the vulgar crowd of papyrus, scarab, and mummy hunters by a certain dim appreciation of the fact that the treasures with which they were dealing had a value greater than that of their price in the curio-market, and who have added at least a few interesting and remarkable items to the mass of Egyptian treasure which the nineteenth century accumulated, though our gratitude to them for this must always be qualified by the fact that we have no certain knowledge of what they lost and destroyed in the process, but can only judge from their own admissions that it must have been far more than they preserved.

Of these men who may be pronounced guilty, but with extenuating circumstances, the most interesting, and perhaps the least harmful, was the inimitable Belzoni, to whose unwearying efforts we owe the opening of the Second Pyramid, the discovery of the tomb of Sety I, the most perfect example of the rock-hewn tomb of a Pharaoh of the New Empire, and the magnificent alabaster sarcophagus of Sety which is one of the treasures of the Soane Museum, London, besides several of the most important royal statues in the Egyptian Galleries of the British Museum. No one who wishes to realise what the young science had to endure at the hands of its first devotees can afford to neglect the extraordinary farrago of vanity and pomposity, ignorance and self-seeking, but also of patience and endurance, and a certain inborn instinct for what was either beautiful or valuable, which

Belzoni has jumbled together under the sounding title—" Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries within the Pyramids, Temples, Tombs, and Excavations, in EGYPT AND NUBIA."

Belzoni's original object in going to Egypt was simply to get " The Bashaw " to adopt a hydraulic machine for irrigation work—a project in which it is almost needless to say that he failed ; his knowledge of the precious material with which he was soon dealing was nothing at the beginning, and not much more at the end of his " Researches and Operations " ; he had a positive gift for quarrelling with everybody with whom he came into contact, Egyptian or European, and a mania for imputing the vilest motives to anyone who coveted any piece of antiquity on which he had set his own heart ; but with it all he had the *flair* of the true explorer for a promising site, and could foresee hidden treasures where his rivals dreamed of nothing, and with all his petulance he had a patience which was almost inexhaustible. It was these qualities which have made him the only explorer of those unhappy days whose name is really remembered, or deserves to be remembered, in connection with our knowledge of ancient Egypt.

As to his methods, these, of course, were unspeakable, and the mere mention of them is enough to turn a modern excavator's hair white. He finds the entrance of a royal tomb in the Western Valley of the Kings, and proceeds to open it—with a battering-ram made of two palm-logs ! As to his reverence for the mighty dead of the past one sentence may suffice : " Every

step I took I crushed a mummy in some part or other." Again he describes his journey through a tomb-gallery which the modern excavator would have given his ears to see as Belzoni saw it. "It was choked with mummies, and I could not pass without putting my face in contact with that of some decayed Egyptian; but as the passage inclined downwards my own weight helped me on; however, I could not avoid being covered with bones, legs, arms, and heads rolling from above."

The object of these ghoulish journeys was simply to plunder the coffins of their papyri, which, of course, were marketable, though as yet no one could read them; and there can be little doubt that far more was destroyed than was preserved by methods which were only a little above those of the Ramesside tomb-robbers who stripped the mummies of King Sebek-em-saf and Queen Nub-khas of their jewels, and then burned them. Such was Egyptian excavation in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, and in the hands of one of its most distinguished practitioners, for Belzoni was an angel of light compared with some of his rivals, native or foreign.

Fortunately, however, the time for such ignorant and sordid exploitation of the treasures of the past was not to last for long; though it lasted far too long for the welfare of Egyptology. By 1822, Jean François Champollion, working on the material supplied by the Rosetta Stone and the Philæ Obelisk, and aided to some extent in his brilliant achievement by the previous

labours of Akerblad and Young, gave to the world the key to the hieroglyphic inscriptions, so that the Egyptian monuments were no longer dumb. In 1828 came the second great general survey of the monuments under Rosellini and Champollion.

It was now possible to read some, at least, of the inscriptions, and therefore to reach some approach to order in the classification of the monuments dealt with. The work suffered an irreparable loss by the early death of Champollion; but the results of the expedition, presented in the ten volumes of the *Monumenti storichi dell' Egitto e della Nubia* constituted a great enlargement of real knowledge as opposed to the conjectures which had previously held the field.

For a time after the Rosellini Expedition, the field was left to individual workers, of whom the most notable were two Englishmen, F. E. Perring and Colonel Howard Vyse, whose careful measurements of the pyramids, especially the great group of Gizeh, laid the foundation for all subsequent study of these wonderful structures. The work of Perring and Vyse was done in 1837, and three years later came the important Prussian Expedition directed by Karl Richard Lepsius, whose name must always stand among the foremost on the roll of Egyptology.

Lepsius began with the Pyramid field at Memphis, where his theorising on the method of erection of the pyramids, though perhaps the part of his work by which he is most generally

known, was of less importance than his investigation of the Old Kingdom tombs of the nobles in the necropolis, with its revelation of the life and culture of the Egypt of 3000 B.C. Thence the mission worked southwards, visiting the Fayum, and carrying out investigations as to the whereabouts of Lake Moeris and the Labyrinth.

Passing on up the Nile Valley, Lepsius paid special attention to the tombs of the Middle Kingdom with their valuable pictures of Egyptian life a millennium later than the pyramid period, and also visited the site which has since become so famous as Tell el-Amarna. Not content with carrying his researches to the limit of the Second Cataract, where Rosellini had stopped, he pressed on through Nubia as far as Napata and Meroë, the former seats of that Ethiopian extension of Egyptian civilisation which gave to Egypt its ill-starred XXVth Dynasty, while on his return journey he visited the Sinai Peninsula, where he discovered and published the very valuable inscriptions left by the Egyptian expeditions which for many centuries were sent to work the copper mines at the Wady Maghareh and Serabit el-Khadem. He thus revealed to us the first chapter of the wonderful story of Egyptian exploring and commercial activity, whose subsequent disclosures have at last almost succeeded in destroying the time-honoured myth which represented the ancient Egyptians as a cloistered nation, the Chinese of the Near East.

The *Denkmäler aus Ægypten und Æthiopen*, published from 1849 to 1858, gave to the

world the results of the wonderfully fruitful work of Lepsius, and has scarcely yet been altogether superseded as a source of illustration of the manners and culture of the ancient Egyptians. " In the main," says Dr. Macalister, " the statement may stand, that Lepsius exhausted the general topographical study of the country." Subsequent researches have done no more than to add filling in to the broad outlines which he drew with such care and certainty.

But now the period of superficial survey of the wealth of material which Egypt offers to the student was drawing to a close, and was to be succeeded by the period in which excavation, conducted with constantly growing skill and attention to the most minute details, was to do, as it is still doing, what no amount of superficial cataloguing of the monuments of the land could ever do, and to give us back, not only pictures of the life of these ancient days, but the tools and weapons with which the Egyptian worked, fought, and hunted, the vessels which he used for all the purposes of life, the jewels with which he and his women-kind adorned themselves, the books which they read, and the songs which they sang ; all the material from which, if we have the vision and the insight, we may reconstruct the life of those far-off days ; and to crown its gifts by calling up from the tomb the very men themselves who ruled and warred in the land of the Nile in the great days when Egypt was the first of all empires, and her Pharaoh a god incarnate, before whose golden sandals all the lesser kings of the world bowed in the dust " seven times

and seven times." The pioneer of this work, surely the most romantic and interesting, as it has proved not the least fruitful, in the whole realm of scientific research, was the brilliant Frenchman, Auguste Mariette.

CHAPTER II

MARIETTE AND HIS WORK

THE story of the life-work of the man who, more than any other, was responsible for the creation of a genuine interest in the great works of ancient Egypt, as distinguished from the aimless or sordid antiquity-grubbing which has been described in the preceding chapter, is one of the romances of science. Mariette was one of those men who, in the words of Cromwell, never go so far as when they do not know whither they are going, and in his early connection with Egypt he was like Saul the son of Kish, who went out to look for his father's asses and found a kingdom. Born in 1821, at Boulogne, and employed as a teacher in the college of his native town, he was drawn to the study of ancient Egypt by the fact that the town museum had acquired a fine Egyptian sarcophagus from the collection of Denon, one of the savants who had accompanied Napoleon's Army of Egypt.

In 1849 he was appointed assistant in the Egyptian Department of the Louvre, and in the following year he was sent out to Egypt for the purpose of buying Coptic manuscripts. The mission, a comparatively trifling one in itself,

3. DETAIL OF DECORATION, TOMB OF SETY I.

was one of those trifles which often prove turning-points in a man's life; and from the moment when he set foot on Egyptian soil, Mariette's future career was marked out for him.

The thing which determined his fate was a passage from the old geographer and historian Strabo. The god of Memphis, the most ancient capital of Egypt, was Ptah, the artificer-god, who was supposed to become incarnate in the sacred bull Apis. As each successive Apis died, it was buried with all the reverence and splendour due to an incarnation of Divinity, in a special necropolis at Saqqara. Later in the complicated story of Egyptian religion Apis was identified with the god of the Underworld, Osiris, and was called Osiris-Apis, and the Greeks speedily corrupted this into Serapis, and called the burial-place of the Apis bulls the Serapeum.

Now Strabo, in writing his account of Egypt, inserted the following passage about this ancient bull-cemetery. "One finds also [at Memphis] a temple of Serapis in a spot so sandy that the wind causes the sand to accumulate in heaps, under which we could see many sphinxes, some of them almost entirely buried, others only partially covered; from which we may conjecture that the route leading to this temple might be attended with danger if one were surprised by a sudden gust of wind." While Mariette was pursuing his inquiries after Coptic manuscripts, he noticed in a garden at Alexandria several sphinxes, and shortly after, when at Cairo, he came across several more of the same type, while more still were found at Gizeh. It was

plain that there was somewhere not far off some storehouse of sphinxes which was being plundered to furnish ornaments for the gardens of local officials. The matter lay in Mariette's mind until one day when he was at Saqqara he noticed the head of a similar sphinx sticking up out of the sand. Searching round about it, he found a libation-tablet, inscribed with a dedication to Osiris-Apis. At once Strabo's statement occurred to his mind, and he realised that he was standing over the avenue of sphinxes which the ancient writer refers to.

Coptic manuscripts went to the winds. Without apparently asking permission of anybody, " almost furtively," as he says himself, Mariette gathered a handful of workmen, and began the excavation. " The first attempts were hard indeed," he says ; " but before very long lions and peacocks, and the Grecian statues of the dromos, together with the monumental tablets or *stelæ* of the temple of Nectanebo, were drawn out of the sand, and I was able to announce my success to the French Government, informing them, at the same time, that the funds placed at my disposal for the researches after the manuscripts were entirely exhausted, and that a further grant was indispensable. Thus was begun the discovery of the Serapeum."

The passage is entirely characteristic of Mariette, and the calmness with which he assumes that the Government which had sent him out to buy manuscripts will be quite pleased to hear that he has spent all their money on something quite different, and has committed

them to a huge excavation which was to last four years, instead of to the purchase of a few parchments, is particularly delightful. One wonders what were the first thoughts of officialdom at Paris when his letter reached the Louvre, and his chiefs realised the kind of man and the irrepressible energy which they had let loose in Egypt to spend money on things which they had never dreamed of.

His action at the Serapeum was typical of his whole career in Egypt. When Mariette had once reached the conclusion that a certain object was desirable, nothing was allowed to stand in the way. He went for his object, one cannot always say straight, for he had caution as well as daring, and knew how to use the wisdom of the serpent, but with a resolute determination which seldom failed in the end to accomplish its purpose; and if regulations stood in the way, so much the worse for the regulations. It was this self-reliance and impatience of restraint which were responsible for a good deal of the wastefulness which undoubtedly was a marked feature of his Egyptian work ; but, on the other hand, without these same qualities it is difficult to see how his work could have been accomplished at all, in the face of all the obstacles which were thrown in his way by Oriental lethargy and corruption, and by European jealousy and selfishness.

The great Apis-cemetery which was thus discovered by Mariette's happy disregard of the limits of his commission is all that remains of the original Serapeum. When the place was complete, it comprised an avenue of sphinxes at

least 600 feet in length, leading up to the great temple of Osiris-Apis. No fewer than 141 of the sphinxes were discovered, together with the pedestals of others. The temple had entirely disappeared, having, no doubt, been used as a quarry for other building operations; but an inclined passage led from one of its chambers downwards into the vast vaults where for centuries the bodies of the dead Apis-bulls were given burial with splendours which rival those of the Pharaohs.

The vaults belong to three periods. In the first, which belongs to the XVIIIth Dynasty, the tombs are separate vaults hewn here and there in the rock; in the second, which is that of Dynasties XXII to XXV, a long gallery was excavated, on either side of which mortuary chambers were excavated as needed; in the third (XXVIth Dynasty) the gallery plan is followed, but on a much larger scale. The total length of the galleries of the XXVIth Dynasty is 1150 feet, and the great gallery alone measures 640 feet in length. In the side chambers are the immense granite coffins, of superb workmanship, which were provided for the last resting-place of the Apis. Twenty-four of these were found in the third gallery. They average 13 feet in length, 11 feet in height, and 7 feet 8 inches in breadth, and weigh not less than 65 tons apiece, magnificent specimens of the engineering skill of the ancient workers who transported these vast blocks from Aswan to Memphis, a distance of almost 600 miles.

The discovery of the Serapeum set the seal

on Mariette's destiny. Henceforward his life-work was to lie in the excavation and preservation of the relics of that ancient land to which fate had brought him; but as yet he occupied no official position in the country, and was, indeed, looked upon rather as an unauthorised interloper by the native antiquity-hunters and the foreign officials who encouraged the constant and shameless pillage which had been going on for half a century. It was in his struggles with these vampires that the great explorer acquired the habits of secret and solitary planning and working which characterised his reign as chief of the Egyptian Service of Antiquities, and the distrust of all other excavators which led him to forbid all such work even to the most famous scholars or to his dearest friends, and to retain the right to excavate exclusively in his own hands to the day of his death.

"Forced to struggle for more than three years," says Maspero in his vivid sketch of his predecessor, "against the jealousy of the dealers of the time and the sharp practices of the Egyptian officials, he was not long in learning and putting into practice all the dodges which the natives employed to track out their rivals or to cheat the treasury. No one knew better than he how to conceal a quest, to pack up the product of it in secret, and to dispatch it without arousing the suspicion of anyone." Curious qualifications for the head of a great Government department; yet they served him well in what was really a lifelong battle against the rivalry of men of science, who, instead of encouraging him in his

efforts to set Egyptology on a firm foundation in its native land, did their worst to rob him of the fruits of his labours ; and against the apathy and indifference of his master, who regarded the antiquities which his untiring servant unearthed as valuable only because he could gratify a globe-trotting potentate by the gift of some of them, or in the last resort might raise a loan on the precious treasures of his Museum.

Mariette's appointment as head of the Service of Antiquities was due, indeed, to a piece of skilful wire-pulling in which de Lesseps and Prince Napoleon, afterwards Napoleon III, were concerned ; and Said Pasha gave him the post, not because he cared for his royal predecessors, but because, as Maspero caustically puts it, " he came to the conclusion that he would be more acceptable to the Emperor if he made some show of taking pity on the Pharaohs."

An appointment due to no higher inspiration than self-interest on the part of the giver obviously depended largely on how long self-interest coincided with the interests of the new post ; and perhaps the most arduous part of Mariette's task consisted in trying to make his thoroughly Oriental master see that it was his interest to maintain what he had begun, and in overcoming the whims and caprices, and the secret intrigues which continually threatened to undermine his position and destroy the structure which he was so painfully rearing. He never could get a permanent grant for the work of his department from the Egyptian Government. When money was needed he had always to ask

it direct from the Khedive, who granted a subsidy or refused it according to the mood in which he happened to be at the moment. Again and again Mariette had to close down his excavations because he had unfortunately approached Said when the Khedive was in a bad temper; but though the continuance of work under such conditions might have driven the most phlegmatic of men, let alone a mercurial Frenchman, to despair, he never for a moment lost sight of his end. Repulsed once, he only waited a more favourable opportunity to return to the charge, and in the end he was almost invariably successful.

When his work is criticised, as it has often, and not unjustly, been, as hasty and wanting in thoroughness, let it be remembered that, with all its faults, it was done under conditions which would have driven most men mad, and that thoroughness and minute care are not precisely the qualities which are encouraged by the knowledge that the exchequer is empty, and that there is no prospect of being able to pay the workmen unless one can catch a wayward prince in a favourable mood. All things considered, the wonder is, not that so much was overlooked and left undone, but that so much was actually accomplished under such maddening conditions.

His main object was to form such a Museum in Egypt that it would no longer be possible for the representatives of the European powers to excuse their spoliation by the suggestion that Egypt was unable to safeguard her own treasures of antiquity. With this end in view he was indefatigable in the work of excavation, doing

his utmost to gather from Memphis, Thebes, Abydos, Tanis, and other famous sites, such a collection of historical monuments as should render the creation of a permanent home for them a crying necessity.

Erelong he had so far succeeded that his collection included fine statues of Ramses II, the well-known Amenartas, the so-called Hyksos Sphinxes, the Triumphal Stele of Thothmes III, and a great mass of amulets from the cemeteries of Memphis, Abydos, and Thebes. To house these treasures he was provided with a set of miserable buildings which were of no use for any other purpose—a deserted mosque which was falling into ruin, some filthy sheds, and a dwelling-house alive with vermin, in which he lived himself. Making the most of this heap of ruins, he improvised pedestals for the statues and cases for the amulets, and turned his early training as a drawing-master to account in the painting of the decorations of his crazy walls.

The incident which finally determined Said to yield to the importunity of his energetic Director of Antiquities was highly characteristic, both of the daring and persistence of Mariette, and the waywardness of the ruler with whom he had to deal. One of the chief hindrances to the erection of the Museum was the fact that the excavations, though highly productive of objects of historic interest, had as yet yielded nothing in the way of gold or jewellery, and Said, a thorough Oriental, cared but little for researches which only produced inscribed or sculptured stones. Early in 1859, Mariette's workmen at

Drah-Abou'l-Neggah, near Thebes, discovered the splendid gilded sarcophagus of the Queen Aahhotep. Mariette sent orders for it to be sent to Cairo at once ; but meanwhile the Mudir of Keneh had laid hands on it, opened it in his harem, and, throwing aside the mummy, took possession of the fine set of jewellery which the coffin contained, and hurried off by boat to present it to the Khedive as an offering from himself.

Mariette immediately set out on his steamboat, the *Samanoud*, to meet the robber. Boarding the Mudir's boat, he tried to persuade him to give up his ill-gotten goods, and when persuasion failed he passed to threats, and from threats to blows. Finally he triumphed, and took possession of the treasure. Knowing the danger which he ran of having his action represented to the Khedive as sheer robbery of a treasure addressed to the Royal Palace, Mariette took care to be the first to tell the story to his royal master, and did so with such effect that the Khedive thoroughly enjoyed the joke, and laughed heartily at the spoiling of the spoiler. He kept a gold chain for one of his wives, and himself wore for awhile a fine scarab which he afterwards returned ; but the rest of the treasure was reserved, as Mariette wished, for his darling Museum, and the Khedive, now convinced that the collection was worth housing, gave orders for the erection of a suitable building at Boulak.

Thus, by a happy combination of good fortune and daring, the great explorer succeeded in the attainment of at least a part of his heart's desire.

The buildings at Boulak, however, were far from satisfactory, and his heart was always set on a dream-museum, which he did not live to realise, which indeed has not yet been realised, though the great Egyptian Museum has known two changes of abode since his time, and is now preparing for a fresh extension to house the treasures of Tutankhamen's tomb. In addition, he had to be continually on his guard to see that the priceless things which he had gathered with such pains, and housed at such risk, were not dissipated to gratify his patron's passing whims of generosity towards some favourite guests, or sold *en masse* to act as security for a loan. Mariette had no intention of allowing his treasures to be treated as pawnbroker's pledges; but it took all his energy and authority to prevent this happening, for whenever Said was short of money, which happened with unfailing regularity, his first thought was to raise a loan on the Museum, and it was only the Director's personal acceptability with his master which enabled him to stave off disaster once and again.

The narrowest escape came just on the heels of what had seemed the greatest triumph of his life. At the Paris Exhibition of 1867, he had secured the first adequate representation of Egyptian antiquities. A small Egyptian temple was built, preceded by a short avenue of sphinxes; and within the temple were housed the finest specimens of art and craftsmanship which Egypt could produce. For six months all the world admired and wondered; then came the blow. Mariette had wrought too well, and made his

treasures look too inviting. The Empress Eugenie had cast covetous eyes upon them, and the Khedive Ismail was informed that she desired to have the whole collection offered to her as a gift. Ismail, taken by surprise, and, as usual, short of cash, did not dare to refuse ; but he had the sense to make his consent subject to one condition. "There is," he said to the emissary of the Empress, "someone at Boulak more powerful than I, and you must address yourself to him." It must have been the cruellest of blows to Mariette thus to be wounded in the house of his friends ; but his resolution was proof against both imperial wiles and threats, and the collection returned in safety to its native home. The explorer had saved the treasures of the land of his adoption from the greed of his native land ; but it was at a heavy cost that the victory was gained. The favour of France, which had always been one of his main supports, was immediately withdrawn, and for the next two or three years Mariette found himself in disgrace at the palace, and unable to obtain any support for his schemes. Curiously enough, it was the downfall of France in 1870 which brought him into favour once more with the Khedive, and for the last ten years of his life he saw the work to which he had given himself steadily growing, though on at least one occasion the proposal to raise a loan on the Museum was revived, and though Ismail's grandiose plans for the extension of the buildings remained only dreams, which came through the ivory gate.

In respect to the excavations which he kept so

jealously in his own hands, Mariette's energy was amazing, though its results were never so carefully chronicled as they might have been, and were sometimes scarcely chronicled at all. The two greatest charges to be brought against him as an excavator are, first, this lack of adequate publication of his results, a huge mass of precious material being gathered without anything to tell the student its actual provenance, or its historical connection, and, second, the craving for big and imposing results, which led him often to neglect the smaller but often more important material which would have been of priceless value to modern workers, but did not appeal to him, and consequently got overlooked and lost.

With regard to the latter point, however, we must remember that the knowledge of the infinite importance of the small game of the archæologist is a thing of modern growth, and that it is scarcely fair to blame Mariette for not being a quarter of a century in advance of his time; and also that the difficulties of his position obliged him to lay stress on the big and imposing monument, even at the cost of neglecting what was really of more value to the serious student. Broken potsherds may mean far more for the reconstruction of history than intact colossi; but to the men in authority on whom depended the continuance of the excavator's work, they were just-broken potsherds.

Spite of all the defects of his methods, we owe him an infinite debt, both for what he accomplished and for what he hindered others from destroying. The chief fruit of his toil,

4. TEMPLE OF RAMSES III, MEDINET HABU.

apart from the work at the Serapeum and in the necropolis at Saqqara, was the unveiling at Abydos of the noble temple of Sety I, with its exquisite reliefs, which will always rank among the very finest work of the artists of the New Empire. Besides the excavation of the temple, he did an immense amount of work, very imperfectly recorded, alas, in the great necropolis of Abydos, where he unearthed over 15,000 monuments of one kind or another. It ought not to be forgotten either, though it often has been, and though it has been stated that in his work at Abydos he had no idea of the existence there of any remains of the early dynasties, that it was Mariette who prophesied both the discovery of Ist Dynasty tombs and that of the great subterranean "Pool of Osiris," which is the latest fruit of M. Naville's work there.

Scarcely less important was his work at Thebes, where he for the first time made some approach to establishing the architectural history of the great temple of Karnak from its foundation under the Middle Kingdom down to the close of building under the Ptolemies. To him, also, we owe the excavation of the great temple of Ramses III at Medinet Habu, and the first beginnings of that huge piece of work which M. Naville and his assistants at Der el-Bahri only completed, after thirteen years' hard labour, in 1908.

How many of the visitors to Hatshepsut's beautiful memorial temple, who wonder at the patience which unearthed this most exquisite of Egyptian buildings, remember that it was Mariette

who first gave to the world the most interesting part of the whole building with its reliefs of the royal expedition to the Land of Punt ?

To tell of all his work at the thirty-seven places in which he excavated would take a volume, and not a chapter. One of his greatest successes, though it dealt only with a Ptolemaic building, was the excavation of the very perfect temple of Edfu. He found it so completely covered with rubbish that an Arab village had established itself upon the roof of the ancient sanctuary of Horus. Mariette succeeded in getting these interlopers cleared away, and was at last able to reveal the whole of a building, which, while comparatively modern as Egyptian temples go, is yet one of the most complete and perfect specimens of Egyptian architecture, showing the almost pure type of temple architecture as it can be seen only in one or two other instances in the whole land.

The great explorer's work in Egypt lasted for almost exactly thirty years. Before his death on January 18, 1881, he had the satisfaction of knowing that the work of which he had so well laid the foundations would not be interrupted when he had to lay it down. He never, indeed, saw the accomplishment of his great life-dream, the completion of a Museum really worthy of the treasures which he had gathered. Sir Gaston Maspero, his able successor, has told us how that vision hovered round his death-bed, and cheered his last hours ; but even to-day the great Museum at Cairo is scarcely worthy of the matchless stores which it holds, and it is

becoming more and more doubtful whether Cairo is the right place for a collection of such priceless value. But at least Mariette accomplished one thing which will never be undone; he put a stop to the worst of the pillage of Egyptian antiquities which had gone on unchecked for half a century, and he established the fact that the proper place where the historical monuments of a great nation's past should be gathered is on national soil, where they are at home, and where they have a value which could never be theirs if they were scattered through a score of alien collections.

A noble statue keeps his memory alive in the Cairo Museum. Maspero tells us that a great personage who visited the Museum asked whether this monument was that of a Pharaoh or of a modern individual; and when he was told that it was the monument of Mariette, the founder of the Museum, "Mariette," said he, "I did not know that the founder of the Museum was a woman!" Such is fame, even in the land where memories seem to endure longer than in any other spot on earth. But Mariette's worth to the world does not depend on monuments, though he had so much to do with them, nor on great personages, though he suffered so much at their hands all his life. It lies in this, that he saved the relics of ancient Egyptian history from the bottomless bog of international jealousies and greed and insisted that a nation with a great past had the right and the responsibility to hold the treasures of that past within its own bounds—in trust for the world.

" Assuredly," says Maspero, " Mariette is not a model to be blindly imitated ; and the man who should imitate him to-day would run the risk of committing irreparable blunders ; but let anyone who is tempted to depreciate him replace himself in spirit in the Egypt of sixty years ago, and let him ask himself how he would have acted in the midst of the difficulties which would then have assailed him on all sides ; I believe that, if he is an honest man, he will be forced to admit that though perhaps he would have handled matters differently, he would not have come better out of the business. Mariette was the man who fitted the time."

CHAPTER III

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE MODERN PERIOD

THE coming of Mariette in 1850 marked the close of the old and bad period of reckless pillage in Egypt. His thirty years of ceaseless struggle against difficulties formed the transition period, in which the foundations of the modern science of Egyptology were being laid, but in which its aims and methods were as yet but partially and imperfectly understood. With his death in 1881, and the beginning of the reign of his successor, the late Sir Gaston Maspero, we may fairly be said to reach the dawn of the modern period, in which new men and new methods have completely revolutionised the whole conception of archæology, and made it one of the most fruitful aids to the reconstruction and the comprehension of ancient history, and above all the indispensable interpreter of the life of ancient peoples. It seems fitting, therefore, that at this point we should stop for a little to consider what archæology is, and what are its aims, its methods, and its materials; for with regard to all these points there is, save in the case of those who are more or less students of the past, a very general haziness in the public mind.

To the average man, archæology might be quite satisfactorily defined as the study of old stones and old bones, potsherds, and fragments of corroded metal—a study presupposing, on the part of the student, a curious and perverted taste for the dry and the dusty and a disregard for all the things which have in them the true sap and joy of life. "Your true antiquarian," it has been said, "loveth a thing the better for that it is rotten and stinketh"; and this judgment, more pointed than polite, fairly represents the conception which most people cherish of the work of the excavator and the interpreter of his results.

Now and again this crude and summary judgment is shaken for a little by some wonderful discovery which seems to hint that there is more in archæology than the man in the street had thought. Some Pharaoh, like Tutankhamen, is found "lying in glory, in his own house," as Isaiah puts it, and the world in general begins to turn in its sleep and dream for a while of the romance of buried treasure. It may be suspected that no small part of the interest awakened with regard to Tutankhamen's tomb arose from the fact that there was talk of the money value of the find running into millions sterling. A science which can produce assets like that must be worth attention. To tell anyone whose interest has thus been excited that the money value of the find, even if it has not been ridiculously overestimated, as is most likely the case, is the least important aspect of it, absolutely negligible in comparison with its other values, is merely to

invite incredulity, polite or otherwise. In any case the temporary interest of the find soon dies away, and the public reverts to its old and normal conception of the archæologist as an amiable and quite harmless lunatic, and of his study as the dullest and dustiest thing under heaven.

All this, of course, is just about as wrong, and as stupidly wrong, as anything well can be. It is, indeed, exactly the opposite of the truth. The explorer, instead of being inspired with a malignant disregard for the sap and joy of life, is really so enamoured of these very things that one of his main objects is to endeavour to make the world realise them not only in the present, but for the past also. His purpose, and his business, if he has any real understanding of the end for which Providence created him (for there are some archæologists who have not, and who almost justify the worst that the public can believe of their science), is not the mere gathering of facts, but the reconstruction by means of these of the life of the past, for the interest, the help, and the guidance of the present. His work is not complete until he has presented a picture of that ancient world in which he is interested, not as it is now, a handful of unrelated fragments of dry bone and dusty papyrus and mouldering metal, but as it was when the dry bones were alive, clothed with flesh and inspired with spirit, when the words on the scroll throbbed with the hopes and fears of a living man or woman, and the corroded bronze or iron was a sword in the hand of a mighty man of valour, or a chisel in that of a

cunning sculptor. Unless he keeps this in view as his real object, he is misconceiving his whole purpose, and substituting means for ends ; unless he can to some extent accomplish this (no man, of course, can do it completely) he is failing of his aim.

But we are still waiting for our definition of what archæology is, and what are the ways in which it is to accomplish this desirable revivifying of the past. It has been defined by a well-known excavator and writer as " the study of the facts of ancient history and ancient lore "—which is very well as far as it goes, but omits, strangely enough, the very point in which its author has shown himself most keenly interested. To complete the definition, one would need to add, " and of ancient life in all aspects."

The archæologist deals with ancient history, and may prove helpful to the historian of the past in many ways ; he deals with ancient lore, and may reveal material which is of the utmost importance for the study of the knowledge and literature of the past ; but his main concern is always with the life of the past, and his main use to the world is to enable the present to see and to realise the life of the past as it really was, to give life again to the men of old so that they shall no longer be names in a dry text-book, but flesh-and-blood figures, and to do this for the common man of the past as well as for his rulers, so that ancient history shall no longer be the chronicle of the deeds, great or otherwise, of Pharaohs and monarchs of all sorts, but shall give you the whole many-coloured tapestry of

life as it was in those far-off days with the fates of common men interwoven with the glittering destinies of their lords and masters.

" Archæological research," says Dr. R. A. S. Macalister in the latest summary of its results, " consists principally in the discovery and the classification of the common things of daily life, houses, personal ornaments, domestic utensils, tools, weapons, and the like." To have said such a thing fifty years ago would have been to make the scientific man of those days hold up his hands in horror at such a degradation of a science whose chief end was the discovery of the great monuments of great men, and the substantiation or correction of history by their means.

To put the change of view in a word, archæology has during the modern period become human. It has learned that history never existed, and cannot be viewed, in a vacuum ; and that quite as important for its right apprehension of the facts is the realisation of the medium in which the facts transpired, and which largely conditioned them. " The true function of archæological research," says Dr. Macalister again, " is to discover the conditions amid which lived such heroes of old as we have mentioned ; to show them, no longer as solitary, more or less idealised or superhuman, figures, but as men of like passions to ourselves moving with other men, in a busy world engrossed in its secular interests, and making daily use of the common things of life." To take an illustration from a familiar figure of Egyptian history, we know, as

a fact of history, that the favourite son of the mighty Ramses II was Setna-Khaemuast, that he fought in his father's Syrian wars, that about the middle of the reign he was high-priest of Memphis, and that he died somewhere before the fifty-fifth year of Ramses; in other words, so far as the big records of the historical monuments go, he is to us "magni nominis umbra," and no more. The real living interest of the man begins for us with the discovery of a papyrus of the Ptolemaic period, now in the Cairo Museum, which shows him studying the old inscriptions at Memphis in search of magic charms, stealing the roll of Thoth from the tomb of an earlier prince, just like a modern explorer, and getting into trouble over the theft.

"The lofty personages," says Maspero in the Introduction to his charming *Contes Populaires*, "The lofty personages whose mummies repose in our museums had a reputation for gravity so thoroughly established, that nobody suspected them of having ever diverted themselves with such futilities in those days when they were only mummies in expectation." That is just the point. It is not the impassive mummies, with their reputation for gravity, thoroughly well-deserved for the last three thousand years, since they became mummies, that we want to know; it is the folk who were only "mummies in expectation," who lived and loved, hated and fought, and made fools of themselves, like other people. And the business of archæology is to show you these people, in their habit as they lived, and in the ordinary

5. TEMPLE OF EDFU—THE PYLON, AND VIEW FROM THE PYLON.

medium which conditioned their actions. If it cannot or does not do that, then it deserves all the vivid abuse which Carlyle used to hurl at the Dry-as-dusts of the past.

Now it is the supreme merit of the modern period that it has been steadily learning the importance of this aspect of its work among the treasures of the past, till now it can say " nothing human is foreign to me." The change of view is set before us very plainly in the contrast between our modern histories of Egypt and those of our forefathers.

Take, for instance, Maspero's *Histoire Ancienne*, or Breasted's *History of Egypt*, and compare the brilliant pictures of ancient Egyptian life which you will find in their pages with the dry summaries of events which passed for Egyptian history fifty years ago. What has made the difference ? Simply the fact that in the interval the archæologist has been learning that his business is not only or even chiefly with the great historical monuments of the land with which he is dealing, but, above all, with the small things which made the background of life, " the pots and pans," as Dr. Macalister puts it, " which are essential if he is to fill in the picture of the ancient life of the region."

The change of view thus brought about is marked by a corresponding change of judgment as to what shall constitute the chief object of search in the excavations which reveal the past to us. In the dawn of excavation it was the big and imposing monument which was eagerly and almost exclusively sought for—very naturally,

for it was only by the discovery of such relics that the explorer could hope, in the existing state of knowledge, to justify his work, and to create the interest on the part of the public which would provide him with the funds which were needed for its prosecution. Colossal statues, granite sarcophaguses, intact burials in Egypt, winged human-headed bulls, alabaster slabs carved in relief, cuneiform tablets inscribed with legends of the Creation and the Flood in Mesopotamia; such were the prizes which rewarded and vindicated the labours of men like Mariette, Botta, and Layard in the middle of last century. It was all very natural and inevitable, as things then were; and it is both unjust and unreasonable to denounce the work of such pioneers because they worked with the knowledge and under the conditions of their own time.

The science of excavation and the knowledge of its true objects did not exist when they did their work; it had to be slowly and painfully created by experience, and in the process it was inevitable that many things should suffer and that there should be much loss of material which a better instructed generation would have known how to value. These great men would doubtless do their work very differently now; but it is vain to criticise them for not possessing a knowledge which nobody possessed in their day. We owe them rather our gratitude for that they accomplished so much in such unfavourable circumstances.

There can be no doubt, nevertheless, that the methods of the early excavators, judged from

the modern point of view, were wasteful to a large degree of the things which we have learned to consider of supreme importance in the study of the past. In their search for the big game of excavation they overlooked, too often with fatal loss to the science of the future, the common things which would have made the indispensable background to their more imposing discoveries, and in many instances what they let slip will never be recovered. To-day the outlook is entirely changed, and the man who should excavate on the lines of Mariette or Layard would be a hopeless anachronism among explorers. The excavator goes to his work now, not with the hope of finding some great monument which will confirm some doubtful statement of history or disprove some theory of succession, not even with the hope of discovering some store of tablets which will let new light in on a dark period. Such things may of course be found, and are welcomed when they are found; and such discoveries as that of the tomb of Tutankhamen tell us that the romance of exploration is by no means a thing of the past. But the modern explorer has learned the infinite importance of little things, and the results for which he mainly hopes are such things as would be heartily despised by the casual and uninstructed beholder. Perhaps the change may be expressed most simply by saying that while the explorer of two generations back looked for colossi, his present-day successor looks for crockery.

It may seem that from a science thus occupied and concerned mainly with the infinitely little,

the romance of the early days of exploration has departed ; but this is to misunderstand the situation. The explorer's work was never romantic in the sense in which the average man understands the word. The idea of the excavator as a man who spends his days in exploring wonderful underground chambers filled with the treasures of the past, is just about as true as the picture of the great detective who is always unravelling the mysteries of crime by the most amazing strokes of genius, and landing himself incidentally in the most appalling situations. There never was such an explorer, or such a detective ; and the life of the one as of the other is mainly one of monotonous drudgery at which most of the folk who talk about romance would shudder. The great thrilling moments, when a discovery which will excite the imagination of the world is made, have always been far between, and the finding of Tutankhamen's tomb has shown that they may still come to the modern explorer just as richly as to his predecessor. But the true romance of modern excavation lies in this, not that it can reveal the dead monarchs of thirty centuries back in all their splendour, but that by its patient piecing together of innumerable small details it can give back to us the actual life of the period in which the dead monarch lived, and let us see the order of his court, and what is far more important to our knowledge of the past, the traffic of the market-place in his cities, and the intercourse of his land with the nations around it. It is scarcely too much to say that because of the minute care with which the modern

excavator has treated the minutest fragments of the relics of ancient days we are better acquainted with the life of the Egypt of the New Empire than we are with that of the ordinary European nation of the Dark Ages, though the latter be more than two millenniums nearer us in time. A science which can accomplish such a miracle of resurrection can never lack the element of true romance in the eyes of anyone who has a real sense of the wonder of life.

It follows from the fact that the modern excavator is called to deal with such a multitude of matters, each in itself perhaps comparatively insignificant, but each of importance, as an additional stroke in the picture of the past which is being slowly built up on the canvas, that far more extensive qualifications are exacted of him than sufficed for his predecessor. " Our explorer in Egypt," says Miss Amelia Edwards, " is only called upon to be an ' all-round ' archæologist within the field of the national history : namely, from the time of Mena, the prototype of Egyptian royalty, who probably reigned about five thousand years before Christ, down to the time of the Emperor Theodosius, Anno Domini 379. Yet even within that limit, he has to know about a vast number of things. He must be familiar with all the styles and periods of Egyptian architecture, sculpture and decoration ; with the forms, patterns and glazes of Egyptian pottery ; with the distinctive characteristics of the mummy-cases, sarcophagi, methods of embalmment and styles of bandaging peculiar to interments of various epochs ; and with all

phases of the art of writing, hieroglyphic, hieratic, and demotic. Nor is this all. He must know by the measurement of a mud brick, by the colour of a glass bead, by the modelling of a porcelain statuette, by the pattern of an earring, to what period each should be assigned. He must be conversant with all the types of all the gods ; and last, not least, he must be able to recognise a forgery at first sight. After this, it must, I think, be admitted that the explorer, like the poet, is ' born, not made ' ! The wonder perhaps is that he should ever be born at all."

It seems, no doubt, a sufficiently formidable catalogue of qualifications ; but to Miss Edwards' list others would now have to be added. For the progress of investigation of the inter-relation of the nations of the ancient east has broken down the limitation which she imposed upon the knowledge of her imaginary explorer, and the Egyptian excavator of the present day must be familiar, not only with all that has been mentioned, but with the related work of Mesopotamia and Babylonia, with the art of the brilliant Minoan craftsman, with all that is known of the enigmatic Hittite civilisation, and with the art, both archaic and mature, of Greece, together with a score of other related matters !

All this development of a science which has grown almost within the lifetime of some of its exponents from a comparatively simple thing to one of the most complex and exacting of human studies, has, of course, been the work of many minds and hands. But if the name of any one man must be associated with modern excavation

as that of the chief begetter of its principles and methods, it must be the name of Professor Sir W. M. Flinders Petrie. It was he, as one of the most brilliant of the exponents of his methods has recently stated, who first called the attention of modern excavators to the importance of " unconsidered trifles," as means for the reconstruction of the past. Above all, it was he who first taught us that for purposes of certainty in the establishment of the succession of different periods, the " broken earthenware " of a people may be of far greater value than its most gigantic monuments. And it has been men trained in the principles which he established who have during the last generation been doing the work which has made the past of the Classic East a living thing to the world of to-day. It remains now to trace the outline of their accomplishment in Egypt.

CHAPTER IV

THE PYRAMIDS AND THEIR EXPLORERS

OF all the works of man there is none which has attained such lasting and universal fame as the group of buildings known as the Pyramids of Gizeh. For the best part of five thousand years this group of mighty structures has been one of the wonders of the world, and the theories which have been framed to account for their existence have been more numerous than the Pyramids themselves. Egypt has many buildings far more beautiful, and perhaps as wonderful; but the Pyramids are, to the great majority of people, the characteristic buildings of the land, and whenever Egypt is named there rises before the mind at once a vision of three vast bulks of masonry squatting defiantly on the rising ground above the Libyan desert, as though challenging Time himself to make any impression on their stupendous mass. "All things dread Time," it has been said, "but Time itself dreads the Pyramids"; and the very exaggeration testifies to the profound impression which their bulk and strength have made upon the mind of man. The mere lapse of forty-five centuries would seemingly of itself

have made next to no impression on them ; the vandalism of man has done a little more ; but even the efforts of those who for many centuries have used the vast masses as a convenient quarry have done little more than show more convincingly the power and skill of the builders who reared in the beginning these huge mausoleums around whose bases the workers of succeeding generations have pottered and scratched like children playing with toy spades in the sand.

Yet though the Pyramids may fairly claim to be the most famous and the best-known buildings in the world, the ignorance in the average mind with regard to them and the purpose for which they were reared is still just about as general and widespread as the fame of them ; and the purpose of this chapter is, first, to tell what, and how many, and of what kind they are ; next, what was the end for which they were reared in the beginning of history ; and lastly, to recount something of the efforts which have taught us what is really known about them.

To most people the Pyramids mean solely the great group at Gizeh ; but though these are by far the greatest and the most famous, they are by no means the only pyramids, nor are they even the oldest. The chief field, known as the Great Pyramid Field, begins almost opposite Cairo, on the western side of the Nile, at Abu Roash, where is the pyramid of Dadefra (Razedef) of the IVth Dynasty, and extends south along the bank of the Nile for a distance of about sixty miles to the Fayum, where lie the pyramids

of the great XIIth Dynasty Pharaohs, the last of the regular kings of Egypt to build pyramids for themselves. Far to the south again in the country which we know as the Soudan, there lie two other pyramid fields, the one at Gebel Barkal or Napata, near to the Fourth Cataract, the other at Begarawiyah, the ancient Meroë, between the Fifth and Sixth Cataracts, and a little more than a hundred miles north of Khartoum. These two fields have neither the greatness of scale nor the historic importance and interest of the Great Pyramid Field, for they belong to the Ethiopian kings, some of whom, for a time, reigned over Egypt in the days of its decline. The Napata group belongs to the earlier Ethiopian monarchs, who founded the XXVth Egyptian Dynasty, which was finally driven out of Egypt by the Assyrians in the reign of Tanutamen, and to their successors, who after the disasters of 661 B.C. maintained the old Ethiopian sovereignty in the south ; the Meroë group belongs to the later Ethiopian kings who reigned after 300 B.C. As things go in Egypt, therefore, these southern pyramids are quite modern, nor do they belong to the most interesting period of Egyptian history, and though they have been long known, they are only now in process of being investigated by the Harvard-Boston Expedition under G. A. Reisner, whose work at Begarawiyah is still unfinished. Our attention, therefore, may be given solely to the Great Pyramid Field.

Beginning with Abu Roash, the next site of importance is Gizeh itself, with all its wonders

of IVth Dynasty work. Passing southwards, we come to Abusir, with its remains of the pyramids and temples of the Sun-worshipping Pharaohs of the Vth Dynasty, lately excavated by the German expedition; beyond these again comes the great field of Saqqara, with remains dating over a long period of Egyptian history. The Step-Pyramid of King Zeser of the IIIrd Dynasty is, of course, the most important and imposing monument; but besides, there are pyramids dating from the latter part of the Vth Dynasty, a number of VIth Dynasty ones, and the splendid tombs of many of the nobles of the early dynastic period, so that, though the Saqqara portion of the field cannot compare with Gizeh in the size of its monuments, it is only second to its northern rival, and surpasses it in the variety and the pictorial interest of its minor tombs. Still travelling southwards, we pass in succession Dahshur and Lisht with their pyramids of the great Pharaohs of the XIIth Dynasty, Medum, with its remarkable pyramid of King Seneferu of the IIIrd Dynasty, rising in three stages, like a Mesopotamian Ziggurat, to a height of 114 feet, and Illahun, where Senusert II had his pyramid, and where the exquisite jewellery of some of the royal princesses was found recently, and reach the last of the series at Hawara, where Amenemhat III, one of the greatest and noblest of the long line of Egyptian Pharaohs, had his last resting-place. In later days there were pyramid tombs at Thebes and Abydos; but the pyramid part of these structures was comparatively unimportant, and they have, in any

case, left few traces behind. Indeed, after the XIIth Dynasty the fashion of pyramid-burial seems to have gradually died out, though we know from the revelations of the Abbott Papyrus that in the XXth Dynasty there were in the Theban necropolis at least ten royal pyramids belonging to kings of the XIIIth to the XVIIIth Dynasty. Altogether there must be at present in Egypt something like seventy pyramids of greater or less importance, without reckoning the later and less important groups of Napata and Meroë.

Passing by the Abu Roash pyramid of King Razedef, we begin our survey with the magnificent group of Gizeh, which to the ordinary man are the Pyramids to the exclusion of all others. Everyone knows, of course, what the Pyramids are like, and has some rough idea of their surpassing size, and perhaps the only way to impress the sense of their vastness on the mind is to use one or other of the comparisons which have been worked out to illustrate the stupendous scale on which they are built. To tell the reader that the weight of the stones built into the Great Pyramid is over six million tons is merely to bewilder him; the vastness of the business may be better appreciated when one realises that a town of the size of Aberdeen might be built out of the materials which Khufu gathered together for his monstrous tomb, or that if the stones were divided into blocks a foot square, and these blocks placed end to end in a straight line, the line would be long enough to reach two-thirds of the length of the circumference of the earth at the Equator.

6. GREAT PYRAMID AND SPHINX, WITH PART OF TEMPLE OF THE SPHINX.

Khufu's pyramid was originally about 481 feet in height, and each of its sides measured at the base a matter of 755 feet 8 inches, and these long lines were laid out and built with such wonderful accuracy that the maximum error is not more than an inch. " The laying out of the base of the Great Pyramid of Khufu," says Professor Sir W. M. F. Petrie, " is a triumph of skill ; its errors, both in length and in angles, could be covered by placing one's thumb on them ; and to lay out a square of more than a furlong in the side (and with rock in the midst of it, which prevented any diagonal checks being measured) with such accuracy shows surprising care. The work of the casing stones which remain is of the same class ; the faces are so straight and so truly square, that when the stones were built together the film of mortar left between them is on an average not thicker than one's thumb-nail, though the joint is a couple of yards long ; and the levelling of them over long distances has not any larger errors." " Equal to optician's work of the present day," says the same authority elsewhere, " but on a scale of acres instead of feet or yards of material."

The Second Pyramid is slightly inferior to the first in size, its measurements being 472 feet in height and 706 feet 3 inches on each side ; and its workmanship is also of inferior accuracy, the errors in length being double, and those of angle quadruple those of its predecessor, while the masonry is of poorer quality. Curiously enough, the sarcophagus, the core of the whole vast building, was in the case of the Great

Pyramid one of the poorest pieces of work of its kind in the period, and much inferior to that of Khafra in the Second Pyramid. Spite of its smaller size, which most travellers scarcely notice owing to the fact of its somewhat superior position, and its inferior workmanship, the Second Pyramid is itself a world's wonder.

Beside these great twin brethren, Menkaura's Third Pyramid, with its 215 feet of height and its length on the side of 346 feet 2 inches, seems diminutive, though its partial outer casing of granite may have given it a richness of appearance which to some extent compensated for its smallness.

Here, then, we have a group of buildings which, from whatever point of view they are regarded, are among the most wonderful ever reared by the hand of man, and which in sheer bulk are by far the greatest of all architectural works. What was the purpose for which these stupendous bulks were built and maintained for so long? To ask such a question was, not so long ago, to let loose all the flood of vain imaginations which always gathers about a subject which is great and imperfectly understood.

The theories which have been framed about the Great Pyramid in particular are almost as monstrous as itself, but have none of its solidity. Of these, perhaps the favourite, because of a certain romance attaching to it, and because of the reputation of some of those who have supported it, is, or rather one should say, was, that it was designed for an astronomical observatory. R. A. Proctor, to whose advocacy the

idea owes a great deal of what vogue it had, has told us that the entrance passage is so placed that at the date which he assumes for the erection of the pyramid (3400 B.C.) it bore directly on the then Pole-Star, Thuban, or Theta Draconis, when the star was on the meridian below the pole, and further, that the great gallery which leads up to the King's Chamber was designed to serve the purpose of a great transit instrument, through whose open upper end the transits of stars could be observed by astronomers occupying seats on cross-benches laid across the gallery at different levels! Still wilder are the fancies which would have us see in the measurements of the Great Pyramid divinely inspired revelations as to units of length, capacity, and so forth, and which gravely inform us that the granite sarcophagus of Khufu is really a standard measure of capacity, of which our British quarter is a fourth part. It seems rather a pity in view of this wonderful theory that Professor Petrie should have just told us of the inferiority of Khufu's sarcophagus in accuracy to that of Khafra, as such a fact tends to disturb the mind as to the truth of our own measures; but it is a sufficient indication of the flimsy nature of the foundations on which all these theories rest.

The fact is that no evidence worth consideration has been brought forward in support of any of them, and in especial that the idea of the great gallery having been a gigantic transit instrument (surely the most cumbrous and inefficient ever designed) is absolutely negatived

by the knowledge which we possess of the object with which the whole building was constructed—an object whose all-important condition was absolute secrecy and concealment. To dream that Khufu built a pyramid to secure his body from discovery and destruction, and then allowed its passages to remain open to the sky for years that astronomers might observe the stars, and tomb-robbers the plan of the pyramid, is to put a fool's cap on the whole business. The Great Pyramid, like all the other pyramids, great and small, was none of the extraordinary things which we have been told it was; it was something simpler and more wonderful than any of them—the greatest witness ever given on earth to the human craving for immortality!

There is no longer any doubt that all the pyramids, from the first imperfect conception of the form in the Step-Pyramid of Saqqara, through the giants of Gizeh, down to the crumbling heaps of brickwork which are all that remain of some of the later fabrics, were built simply and solely as tombs, and that their one object was to render the resting-place of their royal tenant as secure as precautions could make it from the attacks of dynastic enemies or mere robbers.

The pyramid was just one pathetic expression of that marvellously persistent passion which gave us the tomb-chambers of Abydos, with their storerooms for the supply of the dead king's wants in the Underworld, the Mummy with all its wonderful elaboration of means for preserving the shape and likeness of the dead man, the Funerary Statue, with its amazingly

lifelike portrait of the man whose place it was designed to take when time had reduced the mummy to dust, and the soul still craved a recognisable dwelling-place, and the long, rock-hewn galleries of the Valley of the Kings, with their pictured representations of all that could help their owner through the dangers and difficulties of the long journey to the Egyptian Fields of Contentment.

No race has ever been so possessed by any religious idea as was the ancient Egyptian by the faith that it was possible to secure immortal life for humanity beyond the gates of death, possible, but difficult to the last degree, and needing all the effort which could be given to secure so great and so difficult an end ; and the Great Pyramid is just the most colossal seal ever put on that creed, expressing, as nothing else ever could, both the intensity of the conviction and the consciousness of the extreme difficulty of its attainment in actual fact. The Egyptian Pharaoh built his pyramid as the expression of his faith in life everlasting ; he built it as huge and as massy as he could, as the expression of his consciousness of the numberless difficulties and dangers which compassed the road which led to the attainment of immortality, and of his determination that, so far as human effort could secure it, he would be secured against everything which might prejudice his chance of winning eternity.

The Pyramid, then, is a tomb, or rather it is the sole surviving part of the elaborate and complicated structure which the Egyptians of

the Pyramid period devised for the accomplishment of this end of securing the duration of the personality of its owner. For what we see now at Gizeh and elsewhere is by no means what the Egyptians of the early dynasties saw when they looked upon the " eternal dwelling-places " of their great kings, but only a fragment, which by reason of its massiveness, and especially of its form, has survived while the rest of the fabric has perished. The complete pyramid-complex was a development of the normal Egyptian arrangement of tomb-chamber and tomb-chapel. Each Egyptian of any rank or pretensions was buried in a chamber, generally underground, which contained his coffin of stone or wood; but he had also another chamber above ground, where the necessary rites might be observed at the stated times, and the daily offerings of food and drink made for his use in the other world by his relations or by the priests who were appointed for this purpose. These two chambers were combined in the " mastabas " of the Old Kingdom nobles, with their shafts and their chapels. The pyramid took the place of the mastaba, and as it developed, the chapel, instead of being within the same mass of building as the tomb-chamber, was built outside, at the foot of the great structure which protected the mummy of the king, as was fondly hoped, from sacrilegious attack. This pyramid-temple lay at the east side of the pyramid, and in close connection with it. But the pyramids were situated on rising ground, generally at a considerable distance from the cultivated land,

and it was therefore necessary to arrange for a convenient approach to them, instead of allowing the priests or the royal relatives to scramble over the rough ground. Accordingly a secondary temple, or portico, was built down on the level of the cultivated land in a position where it could be approached by boats during the inundation; and from this portico-temple a covered causeway led up to the temple proper at the foot of the pyramid.

We are to conceive of the pyramid fabric, then, as consisting of these four parts, first the part for whose sake all the rest existed, the pyramid itself, with its concealed passages and its carefully protected sarcophagus-chamber, in which lay the mummy of the king in its granite coffin; then the temple crouching at the foot of the great tomb-chamber; then the long covered causeway leading down to the lower levels, and finally the Portico-temple on the margin of the flooded river. One imagines the scene on the feast-day of a great Pharaoh—the graceful and gaily decorated Egyptian river-skiffs drawing up to the stately columned portico on the river bank, and landing their freight of white-robed priests and gorgeous courtiers and princes of the blood, the preliminary service within the lower temple, and then the solemn procession up the causeway to the temple proper where the memory of Khufu or Khafra is celebrated, and his wants for the other world supplied under the shadow of the mighty mass of stone where the bones of the great builder are laid. The Pyramids are impressive enough to-day in their stripped

and gaunt majesty—one wonders if they could be more impressive even in the days of their perfected splendour. Possibly not, but at all events the world can have seen few more imposing sights than an Egyptian Pyramid Field such as that of Gizeh, when its three giants were girt with all the sumptuous fabrics which were part of their essential design as their architects planned them, and without which we are no more seeing them as they were meant to be seen than if we were viewing Salisbury without its spire, or the Duomo of Florence without its campanile.

As to the sumptuousness of these subsidiary parts of the pyramid-complex, we have fortunately first-hand evidence. Little remains of the temple proper of the Second Pyramid, though what there is has been completely excavated ; but the causeway leading down from it has been traced, and it terminates in a building which has been for long familiar as one of the most striking examples of the combined restraint and magnificence of the Egyptian architects of the early dynasties, the so-called Temple of the Sphinx, which is in reality the Portico-temple of Khafra's pyramid. With its severely simple architecture of vertical and horizontal lines, its great blocks of stone absolutely without ornament of any sort, and the richness of its granite monoliths and its alabaster wall-surfaces, it tells us something of what must have been the dignity and splendour of the Gizeh Pyramid Field when it stood intact.

So far as the fulfilment of the object for which they were erected is concerned, the Pyramids of Gizeh are no more than a melancholy

monument of the vanity of human wishes, and an illustration of how human cupidity or malice will in the long run break through the most elaborate system of defence. Professor Petrie has suggested that Sir Thomas Browne was in the wrong when he wrote that "to be but pyramidally extant is a fallacy of duration," and comments upon that characteristic utterance: "Khufu has provided the grandest monument that any man ever had, and is by this means better remembered than any other Eastern king throughout history."

That is so; and yet one cannot help remembering that this was not at all Khufu's object in the rearing of his vast mausoleum. It was not to keep his memory green, but to keep his body intact that the greatest builder of the world raised the Great Pyramid, and in that simple object he utterly failed, as did all his brother pyramid-builders great and small. The evidence shows that not in one single case has greed or hatred failed to overcome all the obstacles placed in their way by royal power. Every pyramid known has been rifled in ancient times, probably not long after its builder was laid to rest in his stately tomb, and the duration of the mass of senseless stone, which bids fair to be as long as that of the everlasting hills, only mocks the hopes with which it was reared. The pyramid remains; but the jewel for whose sake so costly a casket was devised is long ages since "blown about the desert dust."

The story of excavation at the Pyramids of Gizeh has nothing very exciting about it. The

first excavators were, no doubt, the enemies of the Crown, who, as Petrie has suggested, penetrated into the burial-chambers in the troubled days between the VIIth and Xth Dynasties and wreaked their spite on the bodies of their dead masters. Thereafter, through the Classical period, the entrance into the subterranean passages of the Great Pyramid was well known; but the knowledge had been lost by the time of the Arab Conquest, and the Khalif Mamun had laboriously to quarry his way through the masonry into the actual passages, leaving behind him the great hole, which is still called "Mamun's Hole." This was the beginning of the vandalism which has done so much destruction at the Pyramids of Gizeh, though the worst efforts of human stupidity have somehow only seemed to emphasise the dignity and grandeur of the great buildings whose might mocks at the puny attempts of the destroyer. After Mamun had showed the way, his successors followed him, and used the pyramid as a quarry. In 1356 Sultan Hasan used part of the casing of the Great Pyramid in the building of his mosque, and though his work may be, as it has been called, "the finest monument in Cairo," and "the most perfect specimen extant of Saracenic architecture," its beauty is sadly discounted by the fact that it was created by the robbery of the most magnificent example of an architecture more ancient and more noble. Hasan, or one of his immediate successors, added to his crime by stripping part of the casing from the Second Pyramid also, leaving it in the partially despoiled

condition in which it now appears, for one of his coins was found by Petrie deep down in the southern foundation. Compared with such barbarities, the indignities which the Pyramids have had to suffer in all ages at the hands of tourists, who have insisted on disgracing their undistinguished names by scrawling them on these great memorials of the past, are mere trifles.

Early in the nineteenth century Caviglia succeeded in penetrating into the centre of the Great Pyramid, and he was followed in the spring of 1818 by the redoubtable Belzoni, whose account of the manner in which he forced an entrance into the Second Pyramid is as vivacious as the rest of his narrative. Belzoni's earlier efforts only resulted in the discovery of one of the passages by which former explorers had vainly attempted to force their way into the pyramid; but his disappointment only quickened his desire, and as he says in his own inimitable way: "Hope returned to cherish my pyramidical brains." His workmen were speedily set to work again at a new spot. "As to expectation that the entrance might be found, they had none; and I often heard them utter, in a low voice, the word '*magnoon*,' in plain English, *madman*. I pointed out to the Arabs the spot where they had to dig, and such was my measurement, that I was right within two feet, in a straight direction, as to the entrance; and I have the pleasure of reckoning this day as fortunate." Even after the passage was discovered, the removal of the blocks of stone which obstructed it required several days of hard labour;

but at last, thirty days after the work began, the explorer found himself standing in the sarcophagus chamber of Khafra. Besides the empty sarcophagus, Belzoni found the evidence that he had not been the first who had penetrated into the secret of the pyramid, for in addition to many graffiti on the walls of the chamber, which were written in charcoal and rubbed off at the slightest touch, there was an Arabic inscription which ran: "The Master Mohammed Ahmed, lapicide, has opened them; and the Master Othman attended this opening: and the King Ali Mohammed, from the beginning to the closing up."

The Third Pyramid, that of Menkaura, was opened in 1226 by treasure-hunters. "After passing through various passages, a room was reached wherein was found a long blue vessel [the sarcophagus] quite empty. . . . They found in this basin, after they had broken the covering of it, the decayed remains of a man, but no treasures, excepting some golden tablets inscribed with characters of a language which nobody could understand." The disappointed treasure-seekers were succeeded in 1837 by Colonel Howard Vyse, some of the results of whose discoveries are in the British Museum in the shape of a fragment of the basalt sarcophagus, and portions of a wooden coffin, purporting to be that of "the King of the North and South, Men-kau-Ra, living for ever," together with the remains of a man, wrapped in a coarse woollen cloth of a yellow colour. "In clearing the rubbish out of the large entrance room," says Colonel Vyse, "after the men had been employed

12. KARNAK, AVENUE OF SPHINXES.

there several days and had advanced some distance towards the south-eastern corner, some bones were first discovered at the bottom of the rubbish ; and the remaining bones and part of the coffin were immediately discovered all together. No other parts of the coffin or bones could be found in the room ; I therefore had the rubbish which had been previously turned out of the same room carefully re-examined, when several pieces of the coffin and of the mummy-cloth were found ; but in no other part of the pyramid were any parts of it to be discovered, although every place was most minutely examined, to make the coffin as complete as possible." Unfortunately some doubt exists as to the coffin being actually of the period which its inscription claims, and the same doubt hangs over the remains. It has been suggested that the coffin is a restoration of the time of the XXVIth Dynasty, and that the remains are not those of Menkaura, but of one of the treasure-hunters who lost his life in the attempt of 1226. Accordingly we cannot say, as might otherwise have been the case, that Vyse actually discovered a Pharaoh in the great tomb which he had built for his eternal abode. The fine basalt sarcophagus was taken out of the pyramid by Vyse, and shipped for England in 1838 ; but the ill-luck which has dogged the pyramid explorations attended Menkaura's coffin also. The ship left Leghorn on October 12, 1838, and was never heard of again, though some bits of wreckage were picked up off Carthagena.

Valuable work was done at Gizeh during the

years after Vyse's researches by Perring and Piazzi Smyth, though the careful measurement work of the latter was somewhat obscured by the fanciful theories which possessed his mind on the subject of the purpose of the Great Pyramid; but the most complete survey of the Gizeh field was due to Flinders Petrie, who in 1880–1881 measured and planned the whole site with the most scrupulous care.

Perhaps the most interesting result of his work, apart from the evidence which he gathered as to Egyptian methods of working stone, was his discovery, behind the Second Pyramid, of the barracks in which the skilled masons who were permanently employed on the building lived while the work was going on. These were capable of containing easily about 4000 men. The rest of the 100,000, who, as Herodotus tells us, were employed in the building of the Great Pyramid, were doubtless merely labourers employed during the three months of high Nile, when work on the land was impossible, to bring up the blocks of stone and leave them ready for the skilled hewers and masons to work upon. As to the methods of these skilled workmen, evidence of the most interesting kind was accumulated. It was found that the great blocks of stone were sawn by means of bronze saws over nine feet in length, and equipped with jewelled cutting points. The sarcophagi of hard granite or basalt were thus sawn to shape with the most remarkable accuracy, while they were hollowed out by cutting rows of holes with tubular drills also set with jewelled cutting points. The

chief difference between this kind of ancient Egyptian work and modern practice with diamond drills is that the ancient work is undeniably superior to the modern. "Truth to tell, modern drill cores cannot hold a candle to the Egyptians; by the side of the ancient work they look wretchedly scraped out and irregular." "There has been no flinching or jumping of the tool," says Petrie again, speaking of a drill core from Gizeh, "every crystal, quartz, or felspar has been cut through in the most equable way, with a clean irresistible cut."

Our wonder at the mighty mass of the Pyramids of Gizeh, then, is not to be mere wonder at the barbaric power which summoned myriads of slaves and forced them to toil till by sheer brute force they had piled up these mountains of stone. Brute force, unguided and unorganised, would never have built the Pyramids, though millions instead of thousands had been employed, and for centuries instead of decades, but would only have led to disaster and confusion. The wonder of the Pyramids is that five thousand years ago there was found a race whose keen intelligence so clearly understood the need and the marvellous power of organised and trained human labour, architects and engineers who were capable of directing the energies of a hundred thousand men without confusion towards a clearly foreseen end, and craftsmen who were capable of producing, with tools whose material seems to us pathetic in its inadequacy, results which put to shame the best achievements of men using the finest modern tools.

The recent excavations in the Gizeh Pyramid Field, directed by Dr. G. A. Reisner, have added much to our knowledge of the subordinate tombs of the period, and of the life of the times.

Moving southwards from Gizeh, we come to the pyramid field of Abusir, passing on the way the unfinished pyramid of Zawiyet el Aryan. Of this pyramid, designed for the Pharaoh Neferka-Ra of the IIIrd Dynasty, nothing exists above ground. The remains consist simply of the trenches destined for the superstructure, and the inclined plane leading down to the mortuary chamber with its fine oval libation-trough, or sarcophagus. Yet there are few works of ancient Egypt which impress one more with the sense of the magnificent power with which these early architects carried out their designs. "The whole," says Maspero, "is merely a T-shaped ditch, some 100 feet deep; and yet the impression it makes when one goes down into it is unforgettable. The richness and the cutting of the materials, the perfection of the joints and sections, the incomparable finish of the basin, the boldness of the lines and the height of the walls all combine to make up a unique creation."

The German excavations have resulted in the discovery at Abusir of a curious development both of the pyramid idea and of the early Egyptian temple. It was already known from one of the magical tales of the Westcar Papyrus, that the kings of the Vth Dynasty were probably a priestly line of usurpers, who claimed to be related to the Sun-god Ra by direct descent—

a relationship which was henceforth claimed by every subsequent Pharaoh, and embodied in the royal titulary. The German Expedition has revealed to us the unmistakable proof of the devotion of the Vth Dynasty kings to the worship of the Sun-god, and the unique form which their temples took. The temple of Ne-user-ra, for example, consisted of a rectangular court, 380 feet by 280 feet, whose main axis ran east and west. In the western half of this area rose the pyramid, a curious combination of the idea of the mastaba-pyramid of Seneferu at Medum and the later obelisk. On a great block of building about 130 feet square by 100 feet in height, shaped like a truncated pyramid, rose a squat brick obelisk whose point reached a height of about 120 feet. Roofed corridors surrounded the enclosure on the other three sides, and probably provided storerooms for the temple furniture, and for the materials of the offerings. At the foot of the pyramid an immense alabaster altar stood in a small court surrounded by low walls. The obelisk, on its truncated pyramid, represented the Sun-god, and outside the temple wall, near the south side, was placed the most curious of all the furnishings of this curious temple, in the shape of a great boat, built of brick, which bore all the sacred insignia of the Sun-god in his voyage across the heavens. The interior of the temple walls was covered with sculptured scenes of the life created by the god, scenes from the river, the swamps, the fields and the desert, these being the earliest specimens of such mural decorations in any Egyptian temple.

The next stage of the Great Pyramid Field is at Saqqara, where the chief feature is the most ancient, and save for the monsters of Gizeh, the most famous of all the pyramids, the Stepped-Pyramid of King Zeser of the IIIrd Dynasty, the earliest great stone structure in the world. This remarkable building was probably the work of Zeser's famous counsellor and architect Imhotep, the typical wise man of early Egypt, whose counsel was " as though one inquired at the oracle of God," and who was subsequently deified and became the patron-deity of the scribes.

The tomb which he reared for his master (who had also another great tomb at Bet-Khallaf) was built in six stages, stands about 197 feet in height, and has the peculiarity that its base is not a square but a rectangle, measuring 394 by 351 feet. But though the interest attaching to man's first great piece of stonework must always be great, the actually living interest at Saqqara attaches not so much to Zeser's hoary and imposing tomb, as to the comparatively insignificant and decayed pyramids of the Vth and VIth Dynasty kings, Unas, Teti, Pepy I, Merenra, and Pepy II. Mere heaps of rubble and sand as they seem, with none of the splendour of construction or greatness of scale of the Gizeh group, these monuments of the time when the royal power of the Old Kingdom was beginning to decline are yet of supreme value; for they are the first pyramids in which inscriptions have been found, and the long religious texts discovered in them, and now known as the Pyramid Texts, are unique and of infinite importance.

Up to the end of his career, Mariette believed that the pyramids were dumb, as the Gizeh group had proved to be, and therefore looked upon the attempt to open any of the Saqqara group as mere waste labour. Maspero, however, believed otherwise, and the opening of the pyramid of Pepy I in 1880 proved that he was right. The other pyramids named proved also to be inscribed, and altogether the five pyramids give us a series of religious texts covering a period of about one hundred and fifty years, or perhaps one hundred and eighty, from 2825 to 2644 B.C., or, on Petrie's dating, from 4275 to 4090 B.C. Even taking the later dates, these Pyramid Texts form by far the earliest large body of religious writings which have come down from any part of the ancient East, and their importance as sources of knowledge as to the beliefs of the earliest Dynastic period can scarcely be overrated.

Apart from the interest of its pyramids, Saqqara has proved of infinite value to the student of ancient Egyptian life because of the richness of its necropolis in the great mastaba tombs of the nobles of the Old Kingdom. Since Mariette's excavation of the tomb of Ti, who was a great man in his day, and architect to two successive kings of the Vth Dynasty, Nefer-ari-ka-ra and Ne-user-ra, the sculptures of this splendid tomb, and those, scarcely less remarkable, of the tombs of Ptah-hetep, Mereruka and Kagemni, have been recognised as among the most precious accomplishments of ancient art.

Apart altogether from their artistic value, their importance as first-hand documents for

the reconstruction of life in ancient Egypt five thousand years ago is supreme, for their representations, executed with infinite vivacity and spirit, cover almost every department of Egyptian life. The great man is represented as surrounded by all the busy life which ministered to his comfort when he was on earth, or engaged in the sports and diversions which were his relaxation in the intervals of his public duties, sailing, fishing, fowling, or hippopotamus-hunting among the Nile swamps. Farm life, with its changing activities according to the season, and all its peaceful and beautiful incident, is faithfully depicted, so that the crops which the Egyptian landowner grew and the stock he kept can be perfectly known ; while all the crafts which were necessary to the upkeep of a great estate are also depicted with abundant detail and a charming directness and dash. The tomb-paintings of the New Empire at Thebes are much and deservedly admired ; but even they must yield in freshness and charm to these pictures from the dawn of history, which have the dew of youth still upon them, and all the vigour of an art which is already quite sure of itself, but has not had the time to grow stale.

From Dahshur down to Illahun and Hawara lie the pyramids of the great kings of the XIIth Dynasty, who, though Thebans, realised that the centre of gravity of the national government must be further north, and who therefore made their royal residence between Memphis and the Fayum. The earlier kings of the dynasty, Amenemhat I and Senusert I, had their pyramids

7. CHASED GOLD PECTORAL ORNAMENTS OF SENUSERT II AND III (XIIth DYNASTY).

(*From "Arts and Crafts of Ancient Egypt."*)

at Lisht; Amenemhat II and Senusert III preferred Dahshur for their resting-place; while Senusert II chose Lahun, and Amenemhat III Hawara, where he could sleep beside the great works which he had wrought at Lake Moeris for the welfare of his land. The XIIth Dynasty pyramids are not imposing externally. The ruinous piles of brickwork at Dahshur and Lahun look more like gigantic ant-heaps than true pyramids; yet they were the work of kings who in their own way were quite as powerful as the pyramid-builders of the IVth Dynasty, and the detail of the inner workmanship of the sarcophagus chambers is quite as remarkable as anything to be seen at Gizeh. Part of the reason for the difference is a change, not so much in the ideal for which the pyramid was constructed (for that remained constant throughout the history of Egypt), but in the conception of the best means towards the realising of the ideal. "It seems," says Petrie, describing the change which Senusert II introduced in his pyramid at Lahun, "that the pyramids of the earlier kings had fallen a prey to violence already, the signs of personal spite in the destructions are evident. Therefore Senusert II determined to abandon the old system of a north entrance in the face, and to conceal the access to the interior by a new method." His method was to excavate his sarcophagus chamber entirely out of the solid rock on which the pyramid was founded, and to place the entrance to the passage which led to the chamber outside of the pyramid altogether. The shaft which gives access to the

passage actually opens out on the plain, beneath the floor of the tomb of one of the princesses of the dynasty. Inside the rock-hewn chamber which was protected with such care, and which was splendidly lined with red granite, stood the red granite sarcophagus, " exquisitely wrought," says Petrie, " the errors of flatness and straightness being matters of thousandths of an inch."

Yet the cunning and the skill of the XIIth Dynasty architects and masons proved as helpless as the massive power of the IVth Dynasty to protect the dead monarchs from the ravages of hatred or greed. Nor were the elaborate precautions of Amenemhat III any more successful than those of his grandfather had been. Petrie's description of the construction of the inner passages of Amenemhat's pyramid at Hawara reads like something planned to be a nightmare to explorers. " The explorer," he says, " who had found the entrance in the unusual place on the south side, descended a long staircase, which ended in a dumb chamber. The roof of this, if slid aside, showed another passage, which was filled with blocks. This was a mere blind, to divert attention from the real passage, which stood ostentatiously open. A plunderer has, however, fruitlessly mined his way through all these blocks. On going down the real passage, another dumb chamber was reached ; another sliding trap-door was passed ; another passage led to a third dumb chamber ; a third trap-door was passed ; and now a passage led along past one side of the real sepulchre ; and to amuse explorers, two false wells open in the passage

floor, and the wrong side of the passage is filled with masonry blocks fitted in. Yet by some means the plunderers found a cross trench in the passage floor which led to the chamber. Here another device was met. The chamber had no door, but was entered solely by one of the immense roof-blocks, weighing 45 tons, being left raised, and afterwards dropped into place on closing the pyramid." One would have imagined that with such precautions the sleep of Amenemhat would surely be undisturbed; but when Petrie in 1889 tunnelled his way through the roofing-beams of the sepulchral chamber he found that an early plunderer had anticipated him by mining right through the great 45-ton block. "The royal interments had been entirely burnt; and only fired grains of diorite and pieces of lazuli inlaying showed the splendour of the decorations of the coffins."

Here, as in all the other cases of the pyramids, the very elaboration of the means adopted for the preservation of the dead body of the king had only whetted the appetite of the spoiler and destroyer, and little has survived from the XIIth Dynasty pyramids to reward the modern explorer. The great finds in the XIIth Dynasty pyramid fields were all from outside the pyramids. Of these one of the most valuable, though by no means the most spectacular, was Petrie's discovery, near the pyramid of Senusert II at Lahun, of the town, created specially for the occasion, in which the workmen of Senusert had lived with their staff of architects, overseers, and scribes, while the pyramid was under construction.

The little town of Ha-hetep-Senusert, Kahun as it is now called, gives us the most complete instance extant of the character of an Egyptian town of the Middle Kingdom. It occupied an area of about 18 acres, and the plans of the narrow streets and of the houses, mostly small and closely crowded together, though there are exceptions to this rule, have been completely wrought out. Much that is interesting in the way of pottery, tools, and papyri came from the ruins of the deserted houses of the little pyramid-town, whose existence seems to have been a very brief one, probably not much longer than was necessary for the erection of the pyramid.

Again it was not in Amenemhat's elaborately devised pyramid at Hawara, but in the Roman cemetery to the north of it, that the great find was made which has made Hawara famous in the history of ancient Egyptian art, and has given us one of the most valuable contributions ever made to our knowledge of the processes and technique of ancient painting. A cemetery which dates mostly from A.D. instead of from B.C. has in general comparatively little attraction to the explorer in ancient Egypt, unless he be a specialist in the Greco-Roman Period. Accordingly, when Petrie in 1888 found that the cemetery in question was of the first and second centuries A.D., he was on the point of giving it up as not worth working, when one day a mummy was found with a painted portrait on a wooden panel inserted above its face. The picture was a beautifully drawn head of a girl, painted in soft tones, and quite un-Egyptian in its style. It proved to be only

the forerunner of a whole series of similar portraits, of which about sixty were found before the excavations closed. The work was resumed in 1911 with further success. The portraits are of varying merit, and of even the best of them it has to be remembered that we are not dealing with the product of the studio of a skilled artist, but only with that of the workshop of a firm of local undertakers, who supplied funerary portraits just as they supplied coffins. All things considered the quality of the work is wonderfully good, and the information given by these panel pictures as to the methods of the ancient painters is of the highest importance. Before the Hawara discoveries, we were left very much in the dark as to how Apelles, Zeuxis, Polygnotus and their companions and rivals produced the masterpieces which have only survived in the literary descriptions of their contemporaries. The Hawara pictures may be very far, even the best of them, from being masterpieces; but at least they tell us what were the methods by which the great painters of ancient Greece produced the pictures which were considered the equals in artistic merit of the statues which are now the wonder of the world. The manner in which they were painted is often described as "encaustic," but this is an incorrect description of portraits which, so far as can be judged, were simply painted with melted coloured wax, laid on with a free brush, each tint being laid on as a solid body, and not subjected to subsequent glazings.

The XIIth Dynasty pyramid fields at Dahshur

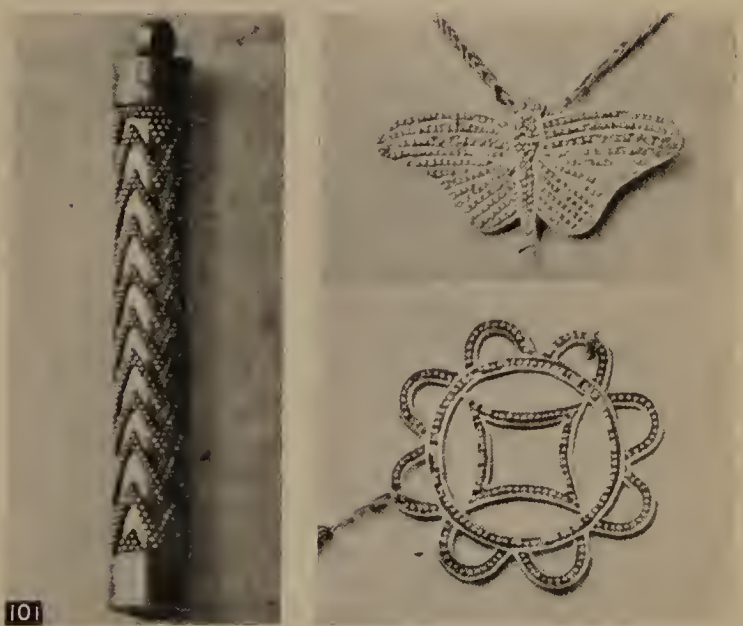
and Illahun have yielded two of the most remarkable finds of Egyptian jewellery which have ever been made, and the results of the work of de Morgan and Petrie in this respect are such as to increase our admiration for the marvellous skill of the craftsmen of the Middle Kingdom. It was in 1894 and 1895 that de Morgan's workmen, clearing up the area round the XIIth Dynasty pyramids at Dahshur, found in the tombs of the princesses of the royal house one of the most wonderful stores of jewellery which have ever rewarded excavation. The two most notable pieces of the treasure were the diadems of the princess Khnumit, the most exquisite examples of the skill of the goldsmith ever worn. "The floret crown," says Petrie, "is perhaps the most charmingly graceful headdress ever seen; the fine wavy threads of gold harmonised with the hair, and the delicate little flowers and berries seem scattered with the wild grace of Nature. Each floret is held by two wires crossing in an eye behind it, and each pair of berries has likewise an eye in which the wires cross. The florets are not stamped, but each gold socket is made by hand for the four inserted stones. The berries are of lazuli. In no instance, however small, was the polishing of the stone done in its cloison; it was always finished before setting." The other diadem is more conventional, but scarcely less beautiful. Eight rosettes of gold and precious stones are surmounted with motives of lyre shape terminating in golden flowers, and the rosettes are united by long links also bearing jewelled rosettes.

The stones of the two crowns are lapis-lazuli, carnelian, red jasper, and green felspar. Along with the diadems were found gold pectorals of fine design and execution, bearing the cartouches of Senusert II, Senusert III, and Amenemhat III, and various other articles of jewellery, and even the famous jewellery of Queen Aah-hotep, so long the typical specimen of Egyptian craftsmanship, must yield the palm to the earlier work in beauty of design and daintiness of execution.

The second discovery came in February, 1914, when Professor Petrie's workmen were clearing a rifled tomb belonging to the " Royal daughter Sat-Hathor-ant " at Lahun near the pyramid of Senusert II. How the treasure of Lahun had ever escaped the plunderers who had rifled the tomb is a mystery. " The tomb had been attacked," says Petrie ; " the long and heavy work of shifting the massive granite lid of the sarcophagus, and breaking it away, had been achieved ; yet all this gold was left in the recess of the passage untouched. . . . The whole treasure seems to have been stacked in the recess at the time of the burial, and to have gradually dropped apart as the wooden caskets decayed in course of years, with repeated flooding of storm water and mud slowly washed into the pit. . . . The whole treasure was standing in an open recess, within arm's reach of the gold-seekers, while they worked at breaking open the granite sarcophagus." We can only be thankful that all the luck did not go to the ancient robber, and that, like his earlier companion who

left the arm of the Ist Dynasty queen, with its jewelled bracelets, at Abydos, he overlooked something to tell a later age of the skill and taste of ancient Egypt.

The chief feature of the Lahun find was a perfect specimen of a royal diadem, bearing the uræus on its front. No actual specimen of the famous double crown of Egypt has ever come to light, familiar though its appearance may be, probably because its materials were of a perishable nature; but the diadem of Lahun gives us a unique specimen of such a crown as Egyptian royalty may often have worn in preference to the cumbrous mitre so frequently figured. "It is formed by a broad band of highly burnished gold over an inch wide, and large enough to pass round the bushy wig worn in the XIIth Dynasty. The uræus is of open work, inlaid with lazuli and carnelian; the head is of lazuli, which was found loose in the mud. Around the polished band were affixed fifteen rosettes, each composed of four flowers with intermediate buds. At the back a tube of gold was riveted on to the band, and into that fitted a double plume of sheet gold, the stem of which slipped through a flower of solid gold. The thickness of the plumes was such that they would wave slightly with every movement of the head. At the back and sides of the crown were streamers of gold, which hung from hinges attached to the rosettes. The whole construction was over a foot and a half high." Such was an Egyptian diadem in the great days of the Middle Kingdom, and surely never did a royal head wear a more



8. *Above,* CROWNS OF GOLD INLAID WITH STONES OF KHNUMIT. *Below,* GRANULATED GOLD WORK. ALL XIIth DYNASTY.

(*From "Arts and Crafts of Ancient Egypt."*)

graceful emblem of sovereignty than that which came so strangely to light in 1914.

Along with the crown were found two pectorals, one of Senusert II, the other of Amenemhat III, of even finer design than the famous pectorals of Dahshur. "The earlier pectoral is inlaid with minute feathering of lazuli and turquoise; the later with a different feathering of lazuli and white paste, which has probably been green. . . . They were probably suspended by necklaces of the very rich deep amethyst beads which were found here." With the pectorals went several gold and jewelled collars and necklets, and broad armlets of golden bars with beads of carnelian and turquoise, and inlaid clasps bearing the royal cartouche, and a number of other articles, amulets and toilet utensils, including a silver mirror with a handle of obsidian, inlaid with bands of plaited gold, and bearing a cast gold head of Hathor. Another item came to light from Lahun in 1920 in the shape of the royal uræus of Senusert II, "a massive gold casting, with inlay of carnelian and lazuli, a head of lazuli, and eyes of garnet in gold setting," which was found near the sepulchral chamber in the heart of the pyramid, amidst a heap of dust and chips of stone. Doubtless this is the royal emblem which adorned the brow of Senusert when he was laid to rest in his pyramid, though how it escaped the notice of the robbers who plundered his tomb is as great a mystery as the escape of the treasure of Sat-Hathor-ant.

Thus the pyramids of the XIIth Dynasty

monarchs, insignificant as they may seem in comparison with the gigantic piles of Gizeh, have proved in their way no less interesting than the colossal work of Khufu, Khafra, and Menkaura. Indeed each of the pyramid groups has its own characteristics, and has given its own contribution to our knowledge of the successive periods of early Egyptian history. To the mighty structures of the IVth Dynasty we owe the revelation of the marvellous organisation of the Egyptian kingdom, and the skill with which its resources could be concentrated on a single gigantic task. To the less imposing buildings of the Vth and VIth Dynasties we owe something perhaps even more precious—the revelation of the thoughts which were shaping themselves in the mind of man in these most ancient days with regard to the soul and its life beyond the grave. To those of the XIIth Dynasty we owe the evidence of the skill which shaped the marvellous red-granite sarcophagus of Senusert II, or the great quartzite funeral chamber of Amenemhat III, and the union of luxury with the finest taste which created the jewellery of Dahshur and Lahun. It may be questioned if even the tomb of Tutankhamen, with all its mass of splendour, will have anything to show us which can surpass in grace and dignity the diadems of Khnumit and Sat-Hathor-ant, or in exquisiteness of finish their pectorals and armlets.

With the decline of the royal power at the close of the XIIth Dynasty, the age of the pyramid-builders closes. Already the taste for

these huge structures was being modified, as it was continually found how powerless they were to accomplish the great end for which they were designed—the protection of the dead body of the king from the hatred of his enemies or the greed of the professional tomb-robber. The decay of the royal power which is so marked even in the beginnings of the dark period which now ensues no doubt completed a process which disillusionment had already begun ; and when Egypt once more found herself under a strong and stable government, the Theban kings who delivered her from the Hyksos tyranny had recourse to another device for securing the continuity of existence after death, and instead of piling mountains of stone or brick above their sepulchral chambers, were hewing in the Valley of the Kings the galleries and halls which have been yielding up their secrets in our time for the wonder and instruction of the world.

CHAPTER V

WORK AMONG THE TEMPLES

SCARCELY less famous than the pyramids, and of far greater beauty, are the splendid temples whose ruins extend from Heliopolis, close to the Delta, to Philæ, where the beautiful shrines of Isis, exquisite in their setting, even if of late date for Egypt, are now becoming only memories of a beauty which has had to yield to the claims of present-day life. Egypt, almost equally with Greece, may claim to be the Land of Temples ; and certainly no other land of the ancient East can rival her in the number, the scale, and the magnificence of the shrines which she reared to her innumerable gods. The claim of the Greek to be the supreme temple-builder of the ancient world is, of course, unquestioned, and nothing in Egypt can bear comparison with the serene beauty of the Parthenon ; but, though the Egyptian architect knew nothing of that exquisite balance and harmony of proportion which has made Greek architecture the crown of human effort in sacred building, the temples of Egypt have a grandeur and impressiveness of their own which make a profound appeal to the mind ; and the contribution

of the Egyptian to the sum of human achievement in this respect is coming to be more and more appreciated every day.

The pyramids show him to have been one of the great master-builders of the world in respect of the vastness of his creations; the temples, often scarcely less impressive in this respect, show him to have been also a master in the art of constructing stately and nobly proportioned examples of that art of the column and architrave of which the temples of Hellas gave the supreme demonstration. The question of how much the Greek owed to the earlier builder may still be the subject of debate; but there can be no question of the originality of the architects who gave to the world such noble specimens of the builder's art as the great colonnades of Karnak and Luxor, the beautiful terraces of Der el-Bahri, and the later glories of Edfu and Philæ.

In one sense there can be comparatively little to tell in the way of a story of excavation with regard to the Egyptian temples. In Mesopotamia and Babylonia the remains of the great temples of Anu and Adad, of Enlil, and of Marduk, owe their restoration to the light of day entirely to the spade of the excavator, for they were completely buried beneath the dust of ages in the great mounds of Ashur, Nippur, and Babylon, and almost nothing was visible to tell of their former splendours till the modern excavator patiently stripped away the mantle in which time had wrapped them.

But the temples of Egypt had never experienced the oblivion which had covered their

northern rivals. They had suffered, indeed, many things at the hands of Time and of human vandalism. Sometimes they were half-buried in the sand which had risen higher and higher, century after century, around their columns; sometimes the shrines of a rival faith had been thrust incongruously into their ruined courts, or an Arab village had grown up like an ugly parasite on their roofs; but there always remained enough to tell that the work of one of the great master-building races of the world was there, waiting the time when it should be stripped of these paltry accretions, and revealed in its full beauty. Karnak, Luxor, Edfu, Dendera, and their companion shrines were never quite forgotten, and even Hatshepsut's exquisite terraces at Der el-Bahri, half-smothered beneath the sand, and wrecked by Coptic fanaticism though they were, still showed enough to enable the first European explorers who described them (MM. Jollois and Devilliers of Napoleon's Expedition of 1798) to be sure of the general character of the building which lay beneath the rubbish-heaps.

Accordingly the work of the excavator in connection with the temples of Egypt has not been so much the discovery of the unknown as the recovery of the complete form of what was already partially known, the clearing away of the excrescences which had attached themselves in the course of centuries to the original structures; the preservation of the more delicate work, such as relief-sculpture and painting, from further injury; the re-establishment in a state of security

of tottering walls and columns ; and, not least, the tracing out of the history of the building of temples which were in general the work of centuries, and of many kings. It has all been work which, from its very nature, can have but little of the nature of romance about it, which has but seldom led to any startling finds, which has involved a colossal amount of sheer hard labour, without any very conspicuous rewards ; but which has resulted in the temples becoming intelligible to the ordinary traveller, and safe for his interest for generations to come, and has enabled us to trace, in the case of a great structure like Karnak, the successive stages by which the vast building grew to a finished whole.

It is, of course, obviously impossible to attempt to tell, even in the scantiest outline, the story of a work which has extended over the whole length of the land from the Delta to the furthest bounds of Egyptian influence in Nubia, and has been carried on by scores of workers of all nationalities. Perhaps our end will best be served by taking a typical instance of the recovery of a temple, and telling in more or less detail the story of the work which gave it back to present-day knowledge. We take as our example Queen Hatshepsut's terraced temple at Der el-Bahri, one of the most beautiful, as it is now also one of the most famous, of Egyptian buildings.

In all Egypt there is probably no more beautiful or imposing site than that of the "Paradise of Amen," which the great queen reared to the glory of the Theban god and of

her own name. On the western side of the Nile, almost exactly opposite Karnak, the limestone cliffs of the Libyan Range sweep backwards in a great semicircle, forming a bay across whose mouth is drawn the long line of the funerary temples of the Theban kings of the XVIIIth and XIXth Dynasties. Behind them, and behind the innumerable tombs of Sheikh Abd el-Qurneh and the Northern Assassif, there lies, close against the salmon-red cliffs, the building which, of all Egyptian temples, makes the strongest appeal of pure beauty, as distinguished from the impressiveness which comes from sheer scale and mass.

The site is one which offers peculiar advantages, but is also encompassed with peculiar risks. No more magnificent background for a building could be desired ; but the background is precisely of such magnificence as to form a dangerous pitfall in which a merely mediocre architect would have been lost. To attempt to compete with Nature, when the work of man has to be placed in such close proximity with her towering architecture, would be to ensure hopeless defeat and to invite ridicule. Khufu's mountain of stone gets its full value from contrast with the long lines of the desert plateau on whose edge it stands. The columns and obelisks of Karnak and Luxor are far enough from the hills on either bank of the Nile to make the human handiwork the central and impressive feature of the picture ; but the site at Der el-Bahri would have made what was possible elsewhere a mere derision. To have placed the huge columns which seem so

9. HATSHEPSUT'S TEMPLE, DER EL-BAHRI, GENERAL VIEW.

great on the Theban plain in competition with the soaring vertical lines of the Libyan cliffs would have been to place a fool's cap on the most grandiose work of human hands. What was needed at Der el-Bahri was a building which should avoid the very idea of rivalry with Nature's handiwork, and which should conquer by subjection, a building where all the emphasis should be laid on the horizontal lines of structure, so as to disclaim at once the thought of competition with the towering buttresses and bastions behind.

It may be questioned if ever an architect more thoroughly appreciated the conditions of his problem, or more satisfactorily fulfilled them, than did Senmut, when he designed for Queen Hatshepsut the three rising courts of the Paradise of Amen, with the long slopes leading from the one to the other, and the stately colonnades, where the shadows are so cunningly pressed into the decorative scheme, and the vertical lines of the columns give emphasis to the horizontality of the whole conception, and never for one moment suggest rivalry with the cliffs above.

Excavation, which has done so much for our knowledge of Der el-Bahri, has taught us that the originality of the XVIIIth Dynasty architect was not quite so absolute as was once imagined, and that he owed at least the idea of colonnaded terraces to the great man of the XIth Dynasty, Mertisen or another, who designed the pyramid-temple, "Glorious are the seats of King Mentuhotep Neb-hepet-Ra," for his royal master. But Senmut was one of those great men who, though they take their blessings where they find

them, can never be accused of plagiarism, because they give back to the world the original idea transfigured and glorified. He has made the idea of the terraced courts and colonnades his own, while avoiding the heavy central block, which, with its somewhat paltry pyramid (if this was ever completed), must have been a contradiction to the whole conception of the rest of the building; and his spacious courts, with their almost Greek grace of surrounding colonnade, seem touched with a spirit which is lacking in the older work.

Mr. Robert Hichens has told us how " after the terrific masculinity of Medinet-Abu, after the great freedom of the Ramesseum, and the grandeur of its colossus, the temple at Deir-el-Bahari came upon him like a delicate woman, perfumed and arranged, clothed in a creation of white and blue and orange, standing—ever so knowingly—against a background of orange and pink, of red and of brown-red, a smiling coquette of the mountain " ; and though his idea is quite too fantastically elaborated (for the idea of conscious striving after prettiness is the last thing one could think of in connection with Der el-Bahri), yet the idea of femininity does occur to the mind when the temple is compared with other Egyptian work. Hatshepsut had not much of the weak woman about her, to all appearance, and Senmut, if his statues are any clue to the man, was as rough-hewn and masculine a piece of granite as one might encounter ; but between them they managed to rear a temple which stands alone in Egypt for the feminine quality of grace.

So now we may turn to the story of how this most graceful of Egyptian temples, unique in its grace if not in its main idea, and unique also in that it is the only temple in Egypt which came into being wholly at the bidding of a woman, was rescued from the accumulations of two and a half millenniums of neglect and the ravages of religious fanaticism.

Hatshepsut's temple was first made known to the modern world, as we have seen, by MM. Jollois and Devilliers, two of the savants attached to Napoleon's Expedition of 1798. The English traveller Pococke had indeed visited the site in 1737; but the thing which chiefly interested him was the abundance of mummies, and all that can be learned about the temple from his mention of it is that in his day the sanctuary was apparently accessible. "Here it seemed," he says, "as though the mountain had been vertically hewn out by the hand of man, and the people of the place said that there had once been a passage through it into the next valley"—the Valley of the Kings.

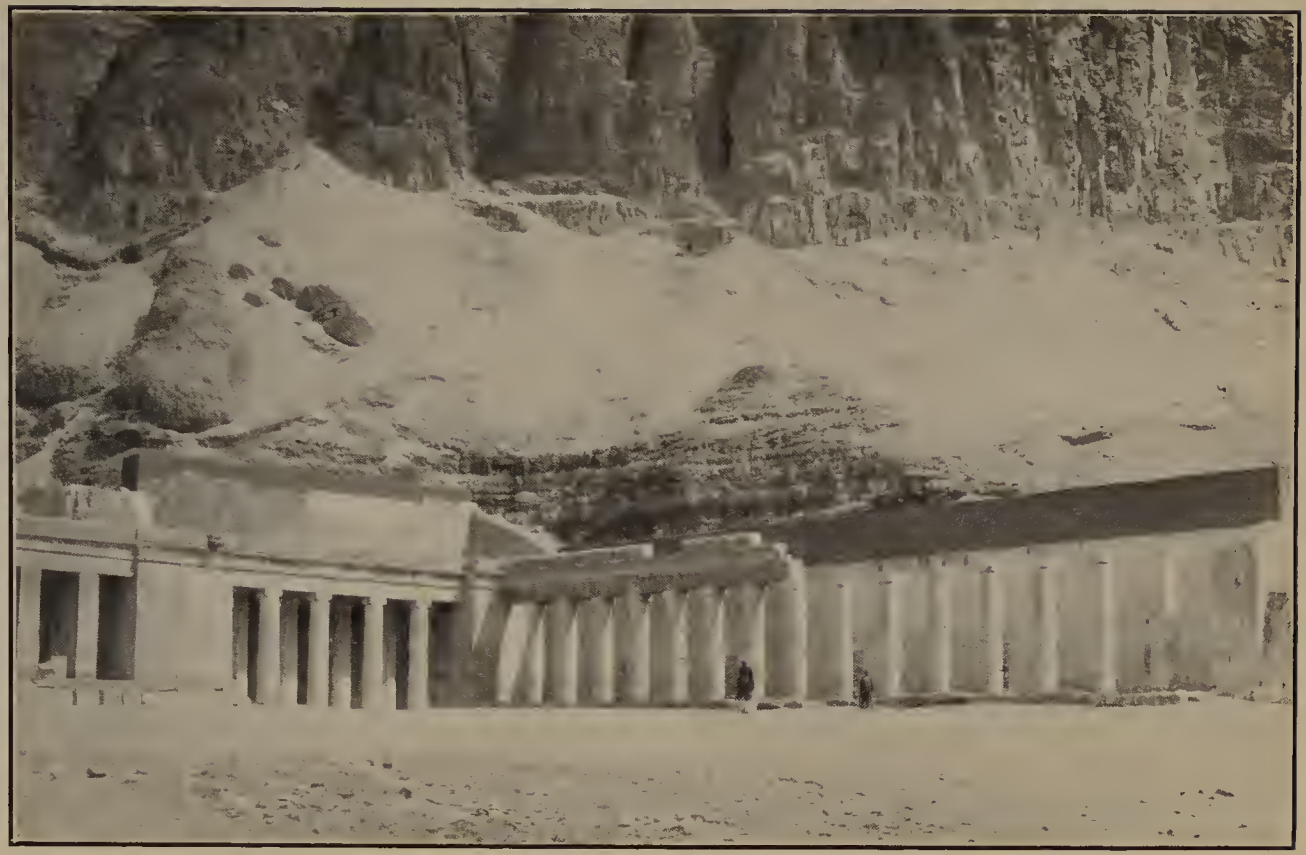
What the French explorers saw sixty years later was not a great deal more. They traced what they believed to be the bases of a series of sphinxes which had formerly formed an avenue, 42 feet wide and 437 yards long, leading up to the enclosure-wall of the temple, the remains of a wall which must have formed part of one of the terraces, what they took for the evidence of two flights of steps, leading to the higher levels of the building, the central part of the highest platform, and the rock-cut sanctuary which

Pococke had seen. The rest of the temple was completely covered with heaps of sand and rubbish.

The next visitor of importance was the famous Champollion, who, as was natural in the first decipherer of the hieroglyphics, was chiefly interested in the inscriptions which were visible, especially on the granite trilithon portal of the upper platform ; and the great scholar at once recognised the existence in these of a puzzle which was only to be solved later. He read the cartouche of Hatshepsut as that of a king Amenenthe ; but was surprised to see that all the nouns and verbs referring to this unknown king were in the feminine, and that the royal builder was addressed by Amen-Ra as " His daughter whom he loves." He imagined the existence of a female ruler Amense, who must have been connected by marriage with an unknown Thothmes, and also with the unknown Amenenthe, and his solution of the mystery, though his names were incorrect, was, after all, not so far from the truth.

Champollion found evidence in the work of the temple of one of his favourite theories—that Greek art found its origin in imitation of Egyptian work ; and here, again, he was only anticipating the recognition of the fact that the colonnades of Der el-Bahri approach nearer to the style of Greek work than almost any other work in Egypt.

Nearly thirty years after the first French explorers, and shortly after the visit of Champollion, Wilkinson surveyed the ruins, and apparently saw, not only the ramps of approach



10. NORTH COLONNADE, DER EL-BAHRI; "PROTO-DORIC" COLUMNS.

to the courts, but also one of the pillared corridors whose walls were covered with sculptures of soldiers carrying boughs and weapons, and with a scene representing the dedication of two obelisks to Amen. His reading of the name of the builder of the temple, Amunneitgori, or Amun-noo-het, was no nearer to the truth than that of Champollion, though he saw that the French scholar's unknown Thothmes was no other than Thothmes II.

Lepsius, who evidently saw more of the temple than any of his predecessors, was the first to make a real approach to the true reading of its builder's name. His version of the name, " Numt Amen," was indeed an almost correct reading of part of Hatshepsut's title, Khnum Amen ; and he conjectured that she was the eldest sister of Thothmes III, who occupied the throne during the minority of her brother, but was not permitted to rank in the regular lists of the kings of Egypt.

In 1858 the indefatigable Mariette visited the temple, and added it to the thirty-six other sites at which he carried on excavations during his thirty years of ceaseless toil. He was too busy with other work at Qurneh to give to Der el-Bahri the attention which it deserved, and his work there was carried on only with a small staff, and for a short time, though he worked again at the place in 1862 and 1866. Nor were his methods here such as to be helpful to his successors. Working, as he did all his lifetime, under the lash, as it were, and with the need of getting the largest possible results with the smallest expenditure of money and time, it was impossible

for him to make his clearances thorough and methodical. Indeed, he seriously added to the difficulties of subsequent excavators by the fact that instead of removing the rubbish of his excavations completely outside the probable limits of the temple, he was forced by stress of time and want of money simply to dump his waste on the nearest convenient spot within the temple area. The consequence was that when Naville came to make the systematic clearance of the whole building, he found several of the most important chambers completely buried, not only beneath the debris of the centuries, but beneath that also which Mariette had heaped on the top of everything.

All the same, it was Mariette who, as in so many other instances, first revealed to the world the real wonder of Der el-Bahri and the surpassing interest of its sculptured halls. His was the first plan to give us anything like a true conception of the form of the temple, then held to be unique in Egyptian architecture; and though his restoration of the details, or rather the restoration of M. Brune, working on his material, was incorrect in several points, it was a good deal less so than some more pretentious attempts which succeeded it, and at least gave an impression intelligible, and in the main not very far from the actuality.

It was to this first excavation of Mariette also that we owe what has ever since been the most picturesque, and not the least informing, of the treasures of Der el-Bahri—the wonderful series of reliefs representing the voyage of

Hatshepsut's squadron to Punt, which decorates the retaining wall terminating the middle platform of the temple. This series of sculptures, one of the priceless treasures of New Empire Egyptian art, would of itself be the justification of Mariette's work.

In 1893 the Egypt Exploration Fund took up the great task of completely excavating Queen Hatshepsut's temple, and their work, conducted by M. Edouard Naville and a number of assistants, only closed with the publication, in 1908, of the sixth folio volume of plates and plans, completing, with the introductory memoir, a present-day memorial which even the great queen need not have disdained, and which is worthy of her fine achievement. By the patient efforts of M. Naville and his fellow-workers the long ramps and spacious courts of the temple were completely cleared of the rubbish of centuries, their graceful colonnades put in a condition of safety, and the priceless coloured reliefs roofed over so as to protect them from the ruinous effects of the weather, which, even in the period between the work of Mariette and that of the Egypt Exploration Fund, had wrought more damage to the wonderful series of scenes of the Expedition to Punt than had been done by all the centuries of neglect.

Wisely the explorers made no attempt at restoration. Their aim was solely one of preservation, and we owe to them the fact that the most interesting temple of the XVIIIth Dynasty is now in a condition which permits some realisation of its former beauty, and which promises its

endurance for centuries to come. Thanks to the explorers' labours, and to the complete view of the building which we owe to Mr. Somers Clarke, the memorial temple of Egypt's greatest queen is now as well known in all its essential features as almost any structure in the world.

The work at Der el-Bahri, however, only ended in one aspect to begin in another. Already in 1879 Mariette, to whose instinct for the possibilities of the various Egyptian sites full justice has never been done, had declared his belief, founded on his discovery of a block of stone bearing the name of King Mentuhotep Neb-hepet-Ra of the XIth Dynasty, and of several fragments of columns, that a small temple of the XIth Dynasty had once existed not far from Hatshepsut's great temple. In 1903, after the completion of the actual work of excavation at the great temple, M. Naville began the excavation of the large mounds to the south of the site of his former labours, and with the assistance of Dr. H. R. Hall and others, the work was carried on till 1907, the final volume of results being published in 1913.

The work began, as M. Naville tells us, chiefly with the view of clearing the XIth Dynasty cemetery which the explorer was convinced lay beneath the great mounds of rubbish ; but the cemetery soon proved to be less, and other objects more, important than had been anticipated. Ere long the diggers made out the line of a ramp, running parallel to the outer wall of Hatshepsut's temple, and, following up the traces of building which successively revealed

11. RELIEFS, DER EL-BAHRI.

themselves, as the mounds, often from 15 to 20 feet in height, were cleared away, they at last completely unearthed the remains of a building which is as unique in the history of Egyptian architecture as Hatshepsut's temple was formerly thought to be. The temple was at an early stage found to belong, as Mariette had suggested, to the XIth Dynasty, and to be the work of one of the greatest kings of this little-known line of rulers, the Mentuhotep Neb-hepet-Ra who has already been mentioned.

It is by no means in such good preservation as its great companion, for about the end of the XIXth Dynasty it appears to have been definitely abandoned as a temple, and handed over to the tender mercies of the masons who used it as a convenient quarry for material. Nothing is now standing above 10 feet from the pavement level, and none of the pillars are above 7 feet in height. Yet the remains are sufficiently complete to allow of the understanding of the appearance which the whole must have presented in the days when Hatshepsut's architect took its platform and colonnades as the inspiration of the great work on which he was engaged at its side.

At the end of a spacious enclosure, bounded by a double temenos wall of which the outer member was of brick and the inner of limestone, a broad ramp, sloping somewhat steeply, rose to the level of a rectangular platform. The retaining wall of the platform was faced, as in the later temple, with a colonnade consisting of a double row of pillars square on plan. The platform itself was surrounded by a double range of

similar square pillars, which was roofed over, and made a kind of veranda completely enclosing the central mass of the temple. In the centre of this colonnade, a door, curiously narrow and paltry for so fine a building (it is only 3 feet wide), gave access to an almost square hypostyle hall, whose roof was supported by a perfect forest of octagonal columns ranged on three sides in three rows, and on the fourth, at the back of the hall, in two. In the centre of this hall, and probably with a narrow open space between it and the innermost row of columns, rose the unique feature of the temple—a rectangular mass of rubble faced with hewn stone, and surmounted by a pyramid of similar materials. Behind the pyramid, and against the wall which separated the pyramid-court from the rear portion of the temple, were several shrines, corresponding to certain tombs in the court beyond.

Passing through another granite doorway, of the same meagre proportions as the one in the front of the hall, the visitor entered an open court surrounded by a colonnade of octagonal columns, two deep on the southern side, but single on the east and west. In the midst of this court the mouth of a sloping passage, which descended for 150 metres to the rock-hewn sanctuary, lined with granite and furnished with an alabaster shrine, where the *Ka* of King Mentuhotep was worshipped, formed a strange and impressive feature. Beyond the open court stood another hypostyle hall, with eight rows of octagonal columns, ten deep, and, last of all, a passage, bounded by two walls which reached

from the seventh of the two central rows of columns in the hall, led to a tiny sanctuary hewn out of the cliff behind the temple.

Such was the temple of Mentuhotep as excavation has revealed it to us—undoubtedly a most interesting memorial of Middle Kingdom architecture, and most important as being by far the most complete example which has survived of the work of that period. Probably we should have thought the dominant feature of the building, the central pyramid, rather an incongruity than otherwise, and evidently Senmut, when he came to his great task six hundred years later, thought so too, for he adopted the ideas of his predecessor in other respects, but discarded what seems to us the clumsy pyramid block altogether. One thing, however, Senmut could not do. He could not secure for his splendid design anything like the fineness of masonry which Mentuhotep's architect had been able to compass in the older temple. The XVIIIth Dynasty builders, clever though they were in many respects, left poor work behind them compared with the magnificent masonry of the XIth Dynasty men.

One of the most interesting features of the older building was found in the six shrines which have been already mentioned. They belonged to certain princesses, Aashait, Sadhe, Kauit, Kemsit, and Henhenit, with one unnamed, who were also priestesses. These shrines were in connection with the tombs of the ladies in question, who were buried within the temple.

The building had been completed before either the tombs or the shrines were inserted;

and the inference has been drawn that these were the ladies of the harem who were chosen for the honour of accompanying King Mentuhotep on his voyage through the Underworld to the regions of the blessed—in other words, who were killed at his funeral so that he should not lack company in the world of the dead. The survival to so late a period of this barbarous custom is not proved, though it has been suggested that it continued even as late as the middle of the XVIIIth Dynasty; but at all events the shrines of the princesses have furnished us with some fine examples of the work of the little-known XIth Dynasty.

In the extreme north corner of the temple, Thothmes III intruded another shrine to the goddess Hathor, which was discovered during the progress of the excavations in February, 1906, and has provided us with one of the most admirable examples extant of Egyptian sculpture. The shrine is a small chamber, 10 feet long and 8 feet high, hewn in the rock and lined with sandstone. The slabs are sculptured with religious scenes in which Thothmes III makes offerings to Hathor. The goddess herself stood in the centre of the shrine in the shape of a life-sized figure of a cow, suckling a kneeling figure of a king, while another royal figure stands in front under her head. The name of Amenhotep II is attached to these figures; but the probability is that they were meant to represent Thothmes III, who dedicated the chapel, and that all that Amenhotep II had to do with the act of piety was the engraving of his cartouche on his father's work. The Hathor cow of Der el-Bahri is

quite one of the masterpieces of New Empire art, quite eclipsing the famous example of the same figure which has come from the Saite period and has hitherto been esteemed one of the finest specimens of Egyptian animal sculpture. " Neither Greece nor Rome," says Maspero of the Der el-Bahri cow, " has left us anything that can be compared with it ; we must go to the great sculptors of animals of our own day to find an equally realistic piece of work." Indeed the Hathor cow and the two lions of Amenhotep III and Tutankhamen, now in the British Museum, might be safely taken as the pieces on which Egyptian sculpture might elect to stand as an interpreter of animal figure.

Such, then, have been the main results of excavation on a single Egyptian site ; surely enough to afford ample justification of the expenditure of time and money and labour which has been involved. Two great temples have been given back to the knowledge of the world—one of them, it is true, from a period otherwise fairly well known, the other from a period which was hitherto almost a blank. Even in the case of the later temple, where the results contained no surprises, and only extended our already existing knowledge, the contribution of this site to our estimate of Egyptian art was of surpassing value ; while Mentuhotep's temple has filled a gap at one of the points where further knowledge of Egyptian history and art was most to be desired.

There have been no marvels of buried treasure to gild the pages of the story of excavation at

Der el-Bahri ; but there has been a solid addition to the sum of human knowledge of the past. At a score of other sites, work similar to that which has just been described has been continually going on during the last thirty years. Mariette's beginnings of clearance at sites such as Edfu, Esneh, Denderah, and Abydos have been followed by work whose thoroughness has been such as Mariette, from the nature of the case, could never have accomplished. To tell the story of excavation, even in the most meagre outline, would take a volume instead of a chapter, and Der el-Bahri must suffice as a typical example of the kind of work which has been done all up and down the land of Egypt.

Reference must be made, however, to one piece of work, associated, curiously enough, also with the name of the explorer of Der el-Bahri, which has a unique interest of its own. This is the discovery of the Pool of Osiris, which, as Strabo told us, lay beneath the great temple, or, as he called it, the Memnonium, at Abydos. In 1914 M. Naville, following up the work of Miss M. A. Murray and Professor Petrie in 1902–3, found a great underground chamber, 100 feet by 60 feet, constructed of huge blocks of limestone, cased inside with hard red sandstone. The pillars, the architraves, and the roofing-blocks of the aisles of this chamber were all of fine granite, without adornment or inscription, and in fact resembled almost exactly the similar work in the so-called " Temple of the Sphinx " at Gizeh, with this difference, that whereas the granite pillars of the Temple of the

Sphinx are 3 feet square, those of the chamber at Abydos are $8\frac{1}{2}$ feet square. The wonder of the building, however, was its arrangement. In the centre of the chamber stood two rows of these great granite monoliths, each row consisting of five pillars. Around the central block of masonry on which these pillars rested, ran a deep channel, which had manifestly once been filled with water, so as to render the central block an island.

Around this channel runs a ledge of stonework about 3 feet wide, and from this ledge access is given to a set of seventeen cells each about 6 feet square and 6 feet high.

Manifestly this extraordinary building is Strabo's " well," which, as he tells us, was below the temple, and was built like the Labyrinth, only on a smaller scale, with passages covered by a single stone. What may have been its use it is as yet impossible to say. The water channel and the ledge round it suggest that the boat of Osiris may have been towed around the pool by his priests on the great feast-days, or when the Passion Play of Abydos, representing the death and resurrection of Osiris, was being celebrated. Two things alone seem certain, the first, the identity of the chamber with the pool described by the old geographer, and the second, that we have here one of the most ancient sacred buildings in Egypt.

Other parts of the structure are the work of the XIXth Dynasty, which did so much at Abydos, and bear the cartouche of Merenptah and representations of this king worshipping the

gods ; but the chamber of the pool is another matter. Its construction is of such a character as to refer it at once to a very much earlier date ; and there can be little doubt that the resemblance to the Temple of the Sphinx is only the evidence of the fact that the two buildings are of the same period, and that the Pool of Osiris is the earliest Egyptian building of any size known, apart from the pyramids.

The magnificence of its masonry shows how far the Egyptians of this early period had already carried the system of construction which they were to use to such splendid purpose in the great temples of the land. Never again, however, even in the great days of New Empire building, did they put together such a piece of sumptuous massiveness as the underground chamber of Osiris at Abydos.

Another aspect of work among the temples must be referred to, as being, in its own way, not less important than the rescuing of the actual structures from obscurity and neglect ; and that is the interpretation of the work thus rescued, the tracing of its history, and the disentangling of the various periods of building which are represented, and the different hands which have been at work in the completion of a building whose history as a growing organism may stretch through centuries, and involve the activities of half a dozen dynasties.

To make the temples intelligible is a matter scarcely less important than to make them visible, and it has involved scarcely less effort. Even after all that has been accomplished in

this direction, a great Egyptian temple such as Karnak remains a sufficiently complicated business to bewilder the ordinary sight-seer and make him turn with relief to the clarity of Greek architecture; but at least it is now possible to arrive at something like an understanding of how the vast bulk of Karnak grew, century after century, to what we now see, and to realise a little of the romance of history which is involved in the succession of Pharaohs who have laboured to make great and splendid the holy and beautiful house of Amen in Thebes.

Let us turn, then, to Karnak, and try to see a little of what modern work has done in the direction of making this vastest of extant Egyptian temples intelligible. A century ago, Belzoni wandered round the ruins of the great temple, his mind filled with vague dreams of Memnon, Osymandias, and Psammethes, perhaps as appreciative of the wonder of what he saw as the most enlightened of his successors, but absolutely in the dark as to the significance of what he saw, or the history of how the great building had been reared; to-day the story of Karnak is practically as well understood as that of one of our European cathedrals, and anyone who likes to take the trouble may trace out the evidence of its age-long growth. Indeed it is difficult for the modern to realise how lengthy is the story which unfolds itself in the sculptured stones of the great temple. We think with something like awe of the long process which reared some of our cathedrals, and which may, perhaps, have lasted for a century, or

perhaps, in an extreme case, for two ; but Karnak was a growing organism for a period of time more than twice as long, not only as any of our cathedrals took in the building, but twice as long as any of them have been standing. Towards the eastern end of the vast complex of Karnak there are still to be seen the scanty relics of the earliest builders of the temple of whom we have any knowledge—the Middle Kingdom Pharaohs, who began their work at Karnak certainly not much later than 2000 B.C. On the western face of the great temple is the Pylon of the Ptolemies, whose dynasty only closed with the subjection of Egypt to Roman rule in 30 B.C. Karnak, in other words, was building for a period which was certainly not less than seventeen hundred years, and which may have been almost two thousand ! Such a consideration makes our ideas as to duration seem very small indeed.

Nor has the work been less complicated than it has been lengthy. Practically every Pharaoh worth naming has left his mark on the great building in some form or another, and often the work of the reigning king was done without the slightest regard to that of his forerunners ; sometimes, indeed, with the deliberate design of obscuring it and blotting out its memory. Consequently the task of disentangling the story of Karnak has been no easy one. It has been like the reading of a manuscript where interpolations of different writers, dealing with different matters, continually break the thread of the main narrative, and where, to add to the confusion, part of the writing is a palimpsest, written over

the faded script of an earlier author. Along with the difficulty of interpreting the story of the various buildings has gone that of preserving them from destruction.

One of the curious facts about Egyptian building is that, for a race of master-builders such as they showed themselves to be, they were strangely, even culpably careless about their foundations. If the mighty halls which they reared had been built on such foundations as modern builders would insist on for even much less important structures, there seems no reason why, short of deliberate destruction by the hand of man, the Egyptian temples should not stand practically for ever. But the Egyptian architect was content to pile walls and colonnades which are the wonder of the world on the most flimsy foundations, and his work is in most cases literally a house built on the sand.

The wonder is, not that there have been occasional collapses, but that the buildings have stood so long as they have ; indeed nothing but their sheer mass and weight has enabled them to endure. Even so, earth-tremors, and the constant and insidious work of infiltration, have worked havoc on the badly founded buildings, and were it not for the constant care devoted to them, and the work of practically refounding them which has been carried out, the great halls of Karnak would ere long be only masses of tumbled ruin. There is nothing dramatic about the work of either the interpreter or the preserver ; neither can point, in general, to any treasure-trove which has resulted from his efforts, though occasionally,

as notably in connection with the work of M. Legrain at Karnak, the work of preservation has resulted in the unearthing of a mass of the most wonderful ancient statuary. But we owe the double fact that Karnak stands to-day and is likely to stand for centuries to come, and that its vast complex of building is intelligible, to many years of quiet and unobtrusive work on the part of scholars and architects.

In the great days of Egypt's glory under the New Empire, Thebes must have been one of the wonder-cities of the world, and one of the fairest sights on which the sun ever shone. It may be that Babylon, in the short-lived glory of the Neo-Babylonian Empire of Nebuchadnezzar, was vaster in extent, and the German excavations have taught us how gorgeous were some of the great buildings of the city, with their facings of enamelled brick and their wealth of colour; but it may be questioned if even Babylon could show anything to match the solemn splendour of Karnak or Luxor, and beside the ordered sumptuousness of the huge Egyptian temples, with their wonders of megalithic construction, one imagines that Babylon's glories would have seemed rather cheap and tawdry. And of all the glories of Thebes, Karnak was the centre and crown.

Petrie tells us that the pitiful remains of the Labyrinth, the great temple of Amenemhat III of the XIIth Dynasty, show that it was big enough to hold all the temples of Karnak and Luxor put together; but the imagination is scarcely capable of trying to comprehend the extent of such a building, and Karnak is quite

big enough for most people. The actual area of its buildings is about equal to that of St. Peter's (Rome), Milan, and Nôtre Dame (Paris); while the sacred enclosure, the Cathedral Close, so to speak, would hold another half-dozen of the biggest cathedrals of Europe, without crowding them unduly.

Let us try to imagine ourselves visiting the great temple in the days when it had reached its greatest extent, though, by that time, the glory of Thebes had in great measure departed. Still the building, as we now see it, was practically completed only in the days of the Ptolemies, and no survey of it would be adequate without including their work. Unfortunately in taking the temple in the natural order of approach, by its west front, so to speak, we reverse almost exactly the order of its building, which was, generally speaking, from east to west. Yet the history of the building is sufficiently intelligible even when thus taken in reverse order, and though there are other approaches to Karnak, and the approach by either the Eastern or the Western Avenue of Sphinxes must have been very impressive, yet the main front of the temple must always have been that which faced the Nile, in the termination of the axis of the whole structure. No doubt also the Egyptian Kings, with their fondness for using their great river as the scene of ceremonial processions, used the western front of the temple for their visits to the shrine of Amen.

We land, then, at a quay of hewn stone, adorned with two small obelisks of Sety II of the

XIXth Dynasty, and with two statues of couchant lions. Passing down a short and gentle slope, we move along a broad paved way between rows of couchant ram-headed sphinxes, which were placed here by Ramses II. The path extends for 200 feet, and leads up to the vastest portal to be found even in this land of vast portals. This is the First Pylon of Karnak—first in point of approach, but last in point of erection, for it is the work of the Ptolemaic Pharaohs who grasped the sceptre of Egypt after the death of Alexander the Great ; and indeed, as you can see, the work is not yet complete. Building is still going on, and the ramps of crude brick by which the great stones are dragged up to their positions are still heaped against the walls, where they will continue to stand for more than two thousand years.

The pylon itself is gigantic. The breadth of the west front of St. Paul's, the greatest building familiar to English minds, is 179 feet, and its height, to the top of the statue of St. Paul on the pediment, is 135 feet. The Pylon of the Ptolemies measures 370 feet in breadth, or rather more than double St. Paul's, while its height is 142½ feet, so that it overtops St. Paul's head by 7½ feet. In addition its walls are 49 feet thick. No mightier approach to a temple was ever devised.

Passing through this great gateway we find ourselves in an open court whose dimensions are worthy of the portal which gave access to it. From the gateway where you stand to the scarcely less imposing pylon of Ramses I, which faces you across the open space, this court

measures 275 feet, while its breadth is 338 feet. The area of St. Paul's is 84,000 square feet, so that this single court of Karnak exceeds our great cathedral in area by 8000 square feet. Around its walls runs a colonnade of single columns. In the north corner of the court there stands a little grey sandstone temple, divided into three chapels, which are dedicated to Amen, Mut, and Khonsu, the members of the Theban Triad. The southern colonnade is broken by the intruding front of a larger temple. This is the temple of Ramses III, the last of the great warrior kings of Egypt, who saved the land, in the degenerate days of the XXth Dynasty, from being overrun and ravaged by the raid of the Sea-Peoples. His temple, though very modest in size (it measures only 170 feet in length), is important as giving one of the most perfect examples extant of a complete Egyptian temple, built from start to finish by one monarch, and on a straightforward and homogeneous plan.

The great court which has taken these two lesser buildings into its sweep was the work of the Libyan Pharaohs of the XXIInd Dynasty, who held their court at Bubastis, and is therefore often called the Court of the Bubastites. The temple of Ramses III was cleared of rubbish in 1896–7 by M. Legrain, in the course of his great work at Karnak. Down the central avenue of the Bubastite court the Ethiopian Pharaohs of the XXVth Dynasty began the erection of a colonnade whose purpose has not been quite determined. As they left it, it consisted of a double range of huge columns, five in each row.

Of the ten, only one solitary survivor now stands, and is known as the Column of Taharqa, after the Ethiopian king who was responsible for its erection, and for some of the sorest disasters of Egypt in her declining days. It was Taharqa and his successor Tanutamen who brought down upon Egypt the wrath of the Assyrian conqueror, Ashurbanipal, whose ruthless soldiery by the sack of Thebes dealt the imperial city a blow from which she never recovered. Taharqa's column stands as the memorial of a man who " began to build, and was not able to finish " in more senses than one.

Leaving the court for a moment by the portal in the south-east corner, we find on the wall of the second pylon one of the most interesting records of the temple. This is the inscription in which Sheshanq, one of the Libyan Pharaohs, records the triumph of that campaign in Syria in the course of which he humbled the pride of Rehoboam of Judah, and robbed Solomon's temple of all the riches which the wise king had accumulated. In Sheshanq's relief a gigantic figure of Amen leads up before the now vanished figure of the king five rows of captive towns of Palestine, each represented by a circular wall enclosing its name, from which emerges the upper part of a bound prisoner.

Before us, as we return to the great court, rises the second pylon, the work of Ramses I, the founder of the XIXth Dynasty. Scarcely any part of the temple is more eloquent of the jumble of times, and kings, and even faiths, which goes to make up Karnak, than the

13. KARNAK, NAVE OF HYPOSTYLE HALL.

neighbourhood of this pylon. The great gateway itself is of Ramses I ; but its materials had their own story before he built them into his new approach to the temple of Amen, and had served another god ; for some of the blocks of the pylon once belonged to one of the heretical temples of Akhenaten, and bear his name and those of his successors, Tutankhamen and Ay. The little vestibule before the pylon is flanked by statues of Ramses II ; but within the doorway are found the cartouches of Ramses I and Sety II, as well as that of Ramses II, while part of the vestibule is the work of two of the Ptolemies. Thus in this little space the work of no fewer than eight Pharaohs, covering a period of more than a thousand years, is represented.

The gateway of Ramses I gives access to what is perhaps the most remarkable, though by no means the most beautiful, of the halls of Karnak. The Hypostyle Hall, one of the hugest of human creations, was, like so much else at Karnak, the work of several sovereigns, though in this case the completion of the building was not so very long protracted as in some other instances. The hall was begun by Ramses I, whose short reign of two years only enabled him to see the work started. The greater part of the hall as we now see it is the work of Sety I, one of the finest of Egyptian Pharaohs, whose work everywhere is in accordance with the nobility of his face as it can be seen at Cairo.

Sety carried out the erection of what is by far the most imposing feature of the hall, the nave, with its double row of gigantic open-flower

columns, the largest in existence. Each of the twelve tremendous columns is 69 feet in height and 33 feet in circumference, while the spreading capitals, 11 feet in height, have an area large enough for one hundred men to stand upon. Imagine twelve versions of the Trajan Column at Rome, or the Vendôme Column at Paris, facing one another in two rows and supporting gigantic architraves of sixty to a hundred tons in weight, which in their turn support the great roofing-slabs. These form the central avenue of the great hall. On either side of them the papyrus-bud columns of the two side aisles rise to a height of 42½ feet. The rows nearest to the central avenue on either side bear above their architraves rectangular pillars which make up the difference between the height of the side columns and those of the centre, and which bear the extremities of the roof of the nave with its cornice. On the lower level of the side pillars, the roof of the hall continues over the rest of the area, supported by a forest of one hundred and twenty-two columns.

Sety I is responsible for the whole of the northern half of the hall, as well as for the central avenue, so that the southern portion of the building is all that Ramses II can claim as his work, if indeed even this part was not erected by his father, and only sculptured by him. Ramses II, however, had the knack of securing to himself the glory of work which was done by other men, and to most people the great Hypostyle Hall of Karnak is his work, though he had really very little to do with it.

The architectural merits of the huge building

are undoubted, up to a certain point; but its faults are equally unquestionable. Mere size tells here, as indeed it almost always does, unless its impression is spoilt by sheer incapacity. There can be no question of the impressiveness of the great building. The central avenue, with its soaring columns, and its grated clerestory rising above the roofs of the side-aisles, is the prototype of all subsequent cathedral architecture. But the side-aisles do not add to the dignity of the great chamber. Their forest of squat, shapeless columns, instead of being impressive, is only bewildering. Here, very certainly, you cannot see the wood for the trees, and the spaciousness of the hall is quite destroyed by the multitude of the supports of its roof. "The size that strikes us," says Professor Petrie, "is not the grandeur of strength, but the bulkiness of disease."

The outer walls of the great hall are sculptured with reliefs representing the wars of its two creators. The north wall bears a fine series of scenes, covering over 200 feet of surface, in which the wars of Sety I are depicted with great spirit. In some later instances such war-reliefs are merely wearisome; but these of Sety are both vivacious and well-executed, and such scenes as that of the king smiting the Libyans are among the best examples of work in this kind, and infinitely superior to the pretentious work of his son. The southern wall has reliefs of Ramses II, his eternal Battle of Kadesh, which he could never forget, or allow anyone else to forget, a copy of the treaty of peace with the Hittites, and the

so-called Poem of Pentaur, in which the king's valour at Kadesh is celebrated.

Behind the Hypostyle Hall comes the IIIrd Pylon, which was reared by the most magnificent, if not the greatest, of Egyptian Pharaohs, the gorgeous Amenhotep III, in whose glittering reign the glories of the New Empire seemed to culminate, before the shadows of his son's ill-starred attempt at religious reform dimmed their splendour. When Thebes was at the height of its fame, and when all the kings of the ancient east were sending their ambassadors to the great city to fall " seven times and seven times " in the dust before the golden sandals of the man who was God visible on earth to a great part of the ancient world, this third pylon was the main front of the great Theban temple, which then occupied not much more than half the space which it now covers. Its western face was used by Sety as the back wall of the Hypostyle Hall ; but on the northern tower on the eastern side can still be seen the faint remains of a great scene in which a royal procession on the Nile in honour of Amen is depicted. One great ship over 40 feet long has the king standing on the poop, and cabins with cornices amidships. Thirty or forty rowers urge it along, and it tows behind it the sacred barge of Amen, which bears in a shrine a small processional bark of the god, and at the bow a sphinx and an altar.

Besides his pylon, Amenhotep wrought a vast amount of work at Karnak ; but it was not, like that of Sety and Ramses, concentrated in a single great structure, but dispersed in various parts

14. KARNAK, COLUMNS OF THE SIDE-AISLE, HYPOSTYLE HALL.

of the sacred enclosure, and so does not produce the same effect. To see the work of Amenhotep on a scale worthy of his importance in the line of Egyptian Pharaohs, you have to go to Luxor with its fine papyrus-bud forecourt, and its noble nave, which, had it been finished, would have almost rivalled the Hypostyle Hall of the later kings in size and exceeded it in beauty; or to try to think back the vanished glories of what was probably the most gorgeous and beautiful of all the Theban temples—the Funerary temple of Amenhotep, which was destroyed, not by the Assyrian conqueror, but by the royal vandals of the XIXth Dynasty, Ramses II and his son Merenptah.

All the same, Amenhotep accomplished no small amount of work, in one way and another, within the enclosure of Karnak. Just beyond the girdle-wall of the great temple on the north side, he built a temple to Mentu, the Theban War-God, with a pylon, and obelisks of red granite. This temple once contained statues in black granite of the king, and of the goddess Sekhmet, towards whom he evidently cherished a feeling of deep devotion, if we may judge by the number of statues to her which he dedicated in the temple of Mut.

The temple of Mentu shared the usual fate of Amenhotep's work, and was meddled with by Merenptah, Ramses V, and at least four of the Ptolemies, a fair specimen of the fashion in which the history of Karnak is complicated by the multitude of superimposed strata, or rather of interwoven strands, with which you have to do.

On the south side, and just at the girdle-wall, stands the beautiful temple of Khonsu (the son of the Theban Triad), one of the finest examples of a complete Egyptian temple of normal form. This is not the work of Amenhotep, but of Ramses III ; but apparently an earlier temple of Amenhotep must have once occupied the site, for the king set up before the gateway a noble avenue of one hundred and twenty-two sandstone sphinxes bearing his name. Beyond the wall, and approached by the eastern avenue of sphinxes, lies another of Amenhotep's contributions to the glories of Karnak—the temple of Mut, the mother-goddess of the Theban Triad, which was excavated in 1895–7 by two English ladies, Miss Margaret Benson and Miss Janet Gourlay. It is full of Sekhmet statues, and behind it lies a sacred lake, shaped like a horse-shoe.

But the following out of the work of Amenhotep has drawn us away from our main quest, the tracing of the story of Karnak proper. Returning to the great temple by the eastern avenue of sphinxes, we pass the girdle-wall by a pylon built by Horemheb out of the material of a temple which the unfortunate Akhenaten had reared in Thebes to his new deity the Aten. Beside the pylon stands a stele inscribed with a manifesto of Horemheb, which was designed to promote peace in the state after the religious troubles of Akhenaten's times. The square court behind the pylon has on its east side the ruins of a small temple of Amenhotep II, and the walls of the court have reliefs of Horemheb. Another pylon of Horemheb, in a very ruinous

condition, closes the court on the north side, and passing through it we are faced by one of the most ancient parts of the whole building, the pylon of Queen Hatshepsut. The pylon bears witness both to what Professor Breasted calls "the Feud of the Thutmosids," and to the religious strifes of the XVIIIth Dynasty, for Hatshepsut's name was erased from her reliefs by Thothmes II, and all allusions to Amen were scrupulously removed by Akhenaten, and restored by Sety I. Behind Hatshepsut's pylon we pass a pylon of Thothmes III, her successor and enemy, and traversing a court whose walls bear inscriptions of Merenptah, the son and successor of Ramses II, in which he describes his victories over the Libyans and the Peoples of the Mediterranean, we find ourselves back at the point from which our digression started, in the central court behind the great pylon of Amenhotep III. Here was the western front of the temple in the days of Thothmes I, and here still stands the solitary remaining member of the quartette of obelisks with which this king and Thothmes III adorned the front of the pylon which now lies in ruins behind them. The obelisks of the later king are both gone—the survivor of the pair of Thothmes I is a fine shaft, 75½ feet high.

Behind his pylon, and between it and a smaller one which he erected to the east, Thothmes reared a fine ceremonial hall with roof and columns of cedar wood; but his work was not permitted to endure for long. It was within this hall that the priests of Amen arranged a little piece of play-acting in which the god Amen declared his

preference for Thothmes III as king, and it was perhaps this unpalatable fact which determined Queen Hatshepsut to make it the scene of a piece of vandalism which was to redound to her own glory. Anyhow, as the time for the celebration of her jubilee drew near, she sent her architect, Senmut, up to Aswan to bring down two great shafts of granite for her jubilee obelisks, and when the tremendous blocks, 97½ feet high, arrived, she stripped off the roof from part of her father's hall and set them up there. Apart from the filial piety of such an act, the obelisks were things of which she might justly be proud.

With the single exception of the stone, the work of her deadly enemy Thothmes III, which now stands before St. John Lateran in Rome, and which is 8 feet higher than its rival, the shaft of Hatshepsut, which still remains erect at Karnak, is the largest obelisk existing, and is more than 20 feet higher than the so-called "Cleopatra's Needle," which represents to Londoners, as its twin does to the folk of New York, the skill of ancient Egypt.

Hatshepsut was so proud of her achievement that she caused the shafts to be engraved with an inscription in which she swears, "As Ra loves me, as my father Amen favours me . . . as I shall be unto eternity like an Imperishable, as I shall go down in the west like Atum, so surely these two great obelisks which My Majesty hath wrought with electrum for my father, Amen, in order that my name may abide in his temple, enduring for ever and ever, they are of one block of enduring granite, without seam or joining."

15. KARNAK, VIEW FROM THE NORTH, OBELISKS OF HATSHEPSUT, AND THOTHMES I.

She goes on to say, what is still more surprising, that the time occupied in the extraction and transportation of the mighty shafts was seven months !

When Thothmes III came to the throne, he showed his love for his distinguished relative by casing her obelisks to a height of 82 feet with sandstone, so that her inscriptions might not be read. As rulers, the Pharaohs of the XVIIIth Dynasty, male or female, stand in the very front rank ; they cannot be said to have shone as exponents of family affection.

To the east of his second pylon, Thothmes I had another court, which was altered and added to by Thothmes III, who built also a small pylon in front of his Halls of Records, which come next in the great complex of building, jostling the apartments of Hatshepsut, which stand beside them. In the First Hall of Records stand the two pillars which strike everyone who sees them as one of the beauties of Karnak, and examples of a type not common in Egyptian work. They are of granite, the southern one carved with the Lotus of Upper Egypt, the northern with the Papyrus of Lower Egypt. The Second Hall was turned into the chapel of the temple, in which the sacred bark was kept, by Philip Arrhidæus, at the beginning of the Ptolemaic dominion, so that one of the oldest and one of the newest parts of the building are here united.

In the open space behind the chapel lie the scanty remains of the earliest Karnak known to us—that of the XIIth Dynasty. A few broken polygonal columns suggest a kinship in style,

for the earliest parts of the great temple, with the work of the XIth Dynasty at Der el-Bahri ; but it is impossible to say with the least approach to certainty what the first temple may have looked like. East again of these remnants comes the last important part of the vast building—the great Festal Temple of Thothmes III, with its fine Hall, 144 feet by 52 feet, and its eastern sanctuary and complex of store-chambers.

The Festal Hall presents a feature unique in Egyptian Architecture. Its colonnade consists of thirty-two rectangular piers ranged round the sides, while down the centre of the hall run two rows of ten round columns, not spaced with the piers, and of extraordinary shape. Instead of tapering from the base to the top, their taper runs the opposite way, and their capitals are inverted, and present the appearance of a bell standing on its mouth. The downwards tapering column is, of course, a familiar feature in Minoan architectural practice, and it is within the bounds of possibility that Thothmes' columns are an Egyptian adaptation of a Minoan motive, for, as the tombs of Senmut and Rekhmara show, Minoan influence was at its height in the middle of the XVIIIth Dynasty, and intercourse between Crete and Egypt was frequent. Whether Thothmes owed the idea to some Minoan suggestion or not, it never established itself in Egypt. In Crete, with its regular use of wooden pillars resting on stone bases, the downward taper was quite natural ; in Egypt, with a prevalent stone construction, it was an exotic, and could show no reason for its existence, and it

was never repeated. One cannot say that its disappearance was any great loss to Egyptian architecture, for the effect of the inversion is singularly clumsy.

We have thus traced the story of Karnak as one traverses the great temple from front to rear, and the bewildering complexity of the building is reflected in the variegated fabric of the narrative. To call Karnak, as is often done, "the typical temple of the Egyptian Empire," is to create an entire misapprehension in the mind of anyone who hears such a phrase used. Karnak is anything but a typical temple; indeed it is not a temple, but rather an aggregate of many temples, and above everything else an epitome of Egyptian history for at least a millennium and a half. One would not even seek it for typical representatives of Egyptian architecture. Karnak, in this respect, possesses its beauties—and its monstrosities; but one would look rather to smaller specimens of the builder's art for an adequate representation of Egyptian achievement in this respect.

The great temple claims, and will always claim, our attention and wonder, by its sheer vastness, to begin with, for undoubtedly vastness has its own effect, though it is not the highest, in the elements of architectural impressiveness; then by the extraordinary way in which it presents a summary in stone of the vicissitudes of Egyptian history; last, and perhaps least, by the surprising quality, and in some instances the beauty, of some of its detail. The main element in its appeal will always be wonder; admiration, and even

that qualified by many reservations, is a bad second to the impression of simple amazement, that human hands and brains should have ever wrought so vast a thing.

The preservation of the temple is, and will continue to be, a work almost as great, and as difficult, as its erection. It lies in the hands of the Egyptian Service of Antiquities, and is a task as unending as the web of Penelope. Generally speaking, such work is of the kind which has to be its own reward, for it makes no appeal to the average visitor, who only sees that his enjoyment of this court or that is more or less hindered by the progress of work whose one merit is that it will keep safe for future generations priceless treasures which otherwise would ere long pass away. Sometimes, however, the work does bring other prizes in its train.

Such was the case when, in November, 1903, M. Legrain, in the course of his work near the pylon of Thothmes III by which we returned to the central court after our digression to the south, found what has since been known as " the Karnak Cachette," a great pit full of pieces of sculpture of all types and periods. " For a year and eight months," wrote Maspero in February, 1905, " we have been fishing for statues in the Temple of Karnak. . . . Seven hundred stone monuments have already come out of the water, and we are not yet at the end. . . . Statues whole and in fragments, busts, mutilated trunks, headless bodies, bodiless heads, vases on which there were only broken feet, Pharaohs enthroned, queens

16. LUXOR, FORECOURT OF AMENHOTEP III.

standing upright, priests of Amon and individuals holding naos, or images of gods, in front of them, crouching, kneeling, sitting, found in all the attitudes of their profession or rank, in limestone, in black or pink granite, in yellow or red sandstone, in green breccia, in schist, in alabaster—indeed, a whole population returns to the upper air and demands shelter in the galleries of the Museum."

The reason for the existence of this extraordinary dump of discarded sculpture, whose richness Maspero's vivacious sentences do not in the least exaggerate, and which gave us, to mention only two examples, the masterly pink granite head of Senusert III, one of the most brilliant examples of XIIth Dynasty sculpture, and the schist Thothmes III, equally one of the finest examples of the art of the New Empire, seems to have been this. The Ptolemies, the presence of whose coins in the pit sufficiently dates it, did a great deal of building at Karnak, and in the course of their cleaning up of the places where they worked, they, no doubt, came on an infinity of out-of-date *ex voto* statues, some of them broken, some of them whole, but all rather a nuisance and obstruction, as the persons with whom they were associated had long since ceased to be of importance. What was to be done with them? They could not simply be thrown out as rubbish, for they had been dedicated to the god, and were therefore sacred; and they could not be allowed to stand littering up the courts which the Ptolemies were busily tidying. Accordingly the great pit was dug

within the sacred enclosure, and Senusert, Thothmes, Senmut, and hundreds of other old Egyptian notables were consigned to its muddy depths, thence to be resurrected, more than two thousand years later, by their degenerate descendants, who baled out the water from the pit with old petroleum cans, and hoisted Pharaoh, High-priest or Statesman, unceremoniously out of his dark resting-place with lever and tackle. It has been a fortunate chance for us, for Egyptian portrait-sculpture might stake its reputation on the two pieces which I have mentioned, and the pit has yielded scores almost as good.

The work of preserving the building, and putting it in a condition of safety for the future, has had a curious interest from the fact that in its progress Karnak has been to some extent rebuilt, and by exactly the same methods by means of which it was built in the beginning. For there can be little doubt, in spite of all talk about the wonderful mechanical knowledge of the ancient Egyptians, and their possession of secrets which have been lost to our time, that Karnak, like all the great Egyptian buildings, was built, not by means of any of these remarkable secrets which never existed save in the imagination of those who have talked about them, but by the disciplined and ordered use of the very simplest means known to man, the inclined plane, the lever, and any amount of obedient human muscle. These were the mechanical secrets which M. Legrain found most useful and most economical in the end of the nineteenth century A.D., as those who had gone before him had done

in the nineteenth, the fifteenth, the fourth century B.C. Senusert, Thothmes, Hatshepsut, Sety, Ramses, Sheshanq, Taharqa, Ptolemy, they all built Karnak by sheer force of human labour, disciplined and guided by a race of builders who for thousands of years had specialised in the training of men for such tasks, and with no more marvellous secrets to aid them than those oldest of man's mechanical triumphs, the ramp and the lever. M. Legrain has repeated their miracles with the same equipment; and in an age of machinery has shown that the human machine may still be the most adequate, the most adaptable, and the most economical.

Thus, then, we have seen, at two of the most interesting sites in Egypt, something of the work which has been going on with the double object of extending our knowledge of the past and of preserving its treasures for the future. Realising something of the importance of such buildings as Der el-Bahri and Karnak, and their scores of companions throughout the land, buildings which are, in effect, ancient Egypt to us, one can feel that work such as that which has been meagrely described in these pages, unspectacular though it may be compared with the work of Pharaoh-hunting, is yet of great and enduring importance, the indispensable fabric on which the glittering embroidery of the treasure-troves from the Valley of the Kings and elsewhere is wrought, and without whose rich and durable substance to form a background the golden glory of the royal tombs would lose half its meaning and beauty.

CHAPTER VI

BURIED ROYALTIES

AMONG the most curious of ancient Egyptian documents are the two papyri, the Abbott and the Amherst, which tell the story of the robberies of the royal tombs at Thebes, which came to light in the reign of Ramses IX, about 1100 B.C. At that time the capital city was ruled, under the Governor, by a certain noble named Paser, who was called "The Prince of the Town." Western Thebes, however, the City of the Dead, was not under the care of Paser, but was supervised by another official named Pewero, who rejoiced in the title of "Prince of the West." Between the Prince of the Town and the Prince of the West there was no love lost, as is not uncommon with the heads of two adjacent jurisdictions; and Paser, on the eastern bank of the river, kept his ears open to all the tittle-tattle of discontented workmen from the Necropolis which drifted across the river. It so fell out in the sixteenth year of Ramses IX, that certain thefts from the Necropolis were reported by the Prince of the West to the Governor; and Paser seized the opportunity of making the most to the Council of the laxity of administration which allowed

17. LUXOR, PAPYRUS-BUD COLUMNS AND COLOSSI OF RAMSES II.

such things, and of suggesting that infinitely worse robberies, involving the Royal Tombs, were occurring under his enemy's jurisdiction.

A special commission was appointed to investigate the charges, and the importance of the case is shown by the rank of the members of the court. These were Khaemuas, the Governor, "The Royal Vassal Nesamen, Scribe of Pharaoh," *i.e.* the King's private Secretary, and "The Royal Vassal Neferkara-em-per-Amen, the Speaker of Pharaoh," doubtless the King's Public Orator. This august court went at great length into the charges, and it is impossible to read the account of the case without feeling that Paser had right on his side, though he rather made a bungle of his case. Obviously his information was mainly derived from ill-natured gossip, for it was so inaccurate in detail that the very royal tomb which he positively declared to have been robbed was found on examination to be untouched; but equally obviously there was a great deal going on in the Necropolis which should not have gone on, and Pewero either connived at the thefts or was culpably careless.

On the whole Paser failed to establish his charges, though in one case, to be mentioned directly, there was plain evidence of the violation of a royal tomb. The Prince of the Town took his failure rather badly, and spoke wild whirling words before a riotous deputation of Necropolis workmen, which got him into trouble; but bit by bit the actual truth leaked out, though not in the Commission.

Three years later, in the reign of Ramses X,

sixty persons, mainly priests and officials of the Necropolis, were arrested on the charge of complicity in the thefts ; and even this big bag of robbers did not bring security to the royal dead. Ere long the priests of the dead kings were frantically hustling the mummies of their dead masters from one tomb to another in the vain attempt to put them beyond the reach of the spoilers, until at last the bulk of the great Theban Pharaohs were gathered, or rather huddled, together, in the obscure shaft of the unfinished tomb of Queen Astemkheb at Der el-Bahri, or in the tomb of Amenhotep II in the Valley of the Kings.

The kind of treatment which was meted out to the mighty dead by the sacrilegious rascals in the Theban Necropolis is detailed for us in the confession of one of them, a confession extracted, for the rest, by the time-honoured Eastern questionary of the bastinado. " We found the august mummy of this god," says the thief, describing his work at the tomb of King Sebek-em-saf and his wife Queen Nub-khas, " with a long chain of golden amulets and ornaments round the neck ; the head was covered with gold. The august mummy of this god was entirely overlaid with gold, and his coffin was covered both within and without with gold, and adorned with every splendid costly stone. We stripped off the gold which we found on the august mummy of this god, as well as the amulets and ornaments from around the neck, and the bandages in which the mummy was wrapped. We found the royal wife equipped in like manner,

and we stripped off all that we found upon her. We burnt her bandages, and we also stole the household goods which we found with them, and the gold and silver vessels. We divided all between us ; we divided into eight parts the gold which we found with this god, the mummies, the amulets, the ornaments and the bandages."

Such was the treatment accorded to a Pharaoh of Egypt by one of his subjects three thousand years ago ; a curious commentary on the present-day Egyptian protests against the opening of the royal tombs in the interests of science ! But the story of the Ramesside tomb-robberies is only an illustration of two contradictory cravings which are seen working all down the long record of the Egyptian monarchy. On the one hand there is the constant attempt of royalty to secure for itself by the most elaborate precautions that age-long endurance of the physical frame which was deemed a necessary condition for the welfare of the dead king in the Underworld, an attempt which expresses itself in different ways, some of them most wonderful, in the successive periods of Egyptian history ; on the other, there is the equally constant and resolute determination of the Egyptian tomb-robber that not all the divinity which doth hedge a king, and especially a Pharaoh, shall keep him from his prey. The Ramesside thief has any amount of lip-reverence for the dead king whose rest he so rudely disturbs ; but all the time that he is talking about " the august mummy of this god," he is stripping the gold and jewels from it,

and his accomplices are kindling the fire which will shortly destroy, from an Egyptian point of view, King Sebek-em-saf's hope of immortality ; and the contradiction is an epitome of a good deal in the story of Egyptian royalty.

The most enduring religious feeling in the Egyptian was the craving for immortality ; and the most permanent, as it was one of the earliest religious convictions, was that immortality was linked with faith in the god Osiris, who, as the legend ran, had been treacherously slain by his brother Set, had risen from the dead, had been judged and pronounced just by the tribunal of the gods, and thenceforth reigned as the god of the Underworld and the judge of the dead.

The devout Egyptian believed that after death, if the necessary conditions had been fulfilled on his behalf, he was identified with his god, and like him rose again, was justified, and admitted to the Egyptian Elysian Fields. These conditions, briefly stated, were, first, the continuance for as long a period as possible, of the body, in a state as closely as possible resembling that of life. Whether this need, which, of course, was responsible for the characteristically Egyptian practice of mummification, sprang from the belief that the spiritual essence of the dead man might find a resting-place after death in the mummified shell of its living abode, or whether the creation of the mummy was merely, as Professor Peet asserts, a counsel of despair, an attempt to deny death for as long as possible, is not certain ; but the attempt to preserve the body, first by the provision of a secure tomb, and

later by mummification as well, endures through the whole of Egyptian history. The second condition was the provision of food and drink, and all the comforts of life, for the dead man in his tomb. The third was the equipping of him with all the words of power which would enable him to escape the dangers which haunted the ways of the Underworld, and to pass the ordeal of the judgment, and with amulets which would prove efficacious in warding off the assaults of the demons of the Underworld. Last of all, as in the Elysian Fields there was work to be done, and it was not fitting that a king or a great noble should stoop to manual labour, the dead man had to be provided with simulacra of servants who should answer for him when he was called upon for service, and take upon themselves his burden of labour.

Out of all these conditions there arose gradually the whole wealth of Egyptian funerary equipment, as it is found in the tombs of the great men of the land, and above all in those of the Pharaohs, an equipment whose splendour has dazzled the whole world in the revelations of the tomb of Tutankhamen. From the very earliest times the kings of Egypt were laid to rest with elaborate provision for the wants of the dead monarch, and the provision grew in completeness and complexity with each successive generation, till it reached its culmination in the gorgeous tombs of the Theban Pharaohs of the New Empire, with their hundreds of feet of rock-hewn chamber and corridor, their glittering canopies, their nests of gilded coffins, their

wealth of costly amulets and illuminated papyri, their stores of ushabtis, and, at the heart of all, the wonderfully preserved mummy of the man for whom all this magnificence had been prepared.

It may be questioned, however, whether all these precautions did not rather tend to defeat their own end, and whether Pharaoh might not have slumbered in greater security had his tomb been less gorgeous and less richly equipped than he could hope to do when his tomb was a wonder of the world, and when all men knew that wealth untold was stored within its dark depths. At all events we know that from the earliest days of the Egyptian kingdom to the latest the kings were few indeed whose rest was not rudely broken by the sacrilegious hands of robbers. The fate of King Sebek-em-saf, already described, is typical of that of the royal tombs in general. For five thousand years human greed has proved more powerful than human piety or even than human superstition. To-day, the professional tomb-robber of native birth, though his activities are as skilfully conducted as ever, finds a rival in the scientific explorer, whose disturbance of the rest of the royal dead, though there are still many who object to the work as a profanation of what all men should regard as sacred, is at least conducted with as much reverence as possible, and in the interests not of individual greed of gain, but of the general sum of knowledge of the human race.

In this respect the situation should be clearly understood. It is not a question of whether the dead kings of ancient Egypt shall or shall not

be allowed to rest in peace in their tombs. That question has been settled, and settled in the negative, for many centuries by the persistent habit of the Egyptians themselves. Robbed the tombs of the Pharaohs (such of them as still remain undisturbed) will inevitably be. That is as sure as death itself. The only question is whether the robbery shall be conducted by ignorant fellahin for the sake of private gain, and in such a fashion that the whole of the results shall be scattered among a score of private collections, and all their historic value forever lost, or whether it shall be conducted in orderly and scientific fashion, the finds duly catalogued in their true order, and gathered together in one great assemblage in a place where they can be studied in their true relation to one another, and to other finds of similar character.

There can be no doubt as to which of these methods is preferable. To deny to the man of science the opportunity of investigating the history, the art, and the life of the past as revealed in the treasures of the royal tombs is simply to make it certain that, without securing in the least the sanctity of the tombs, all the knowledge which might have been drawn from them shall be lost forever to the world. This is the sufficient justification of those excavations which, in spite of all the interest created by their revelations, have so often created also a feeling of repugnance and protest.

The story of the royal tombs of Egypt begins with the excavation of the Sacred City of Osiris, Abydos. The work there is by no means the

earliest in point of time of the series of discoveries which have been made in connection with the burial of royalty, though Abydos was one of the sites excavated by Mariette, who revealed to the world the wonderful XIXth Dynasty work of the temple of Sety I there. Much had been discovered at Thebes and at Memphis before Amélineau and Petrie began at Abydos those researches which have revolutionised our knowledge of early Egyptian history and civilisation, and have given back to us several centuries of the story of human effort which had previously been shrouded in darkness; but it seems best to follow the subject down the line of history rather than to follow the order of discovery with its consequent mixing up of all the dynasties and periods.

Up to the nineties of last century, it may be said that practically nothing was known of those earliest Kings of Egypt who reigned before the time of the IVth Dynasty. The history of Egypt began with the Pyramid-builders, Khufu, Khafra, and Menkaura; and so far as any real knowledge went, Egyptian civilisation sprang, like Athene, full-armed and full grown into being, and offered to the world as its firstfruits the most gigantic structures ever reared by the hand of man.

Obviously this was an impossibility, for things do not happen thus in real life, and the advance of civilisation is a business, not of leaps and bounds, but of slow and ordered progress; but before the Pyramid-builders there was nothing in Egyptian history but a gulf of misty

18. COLONNADE IN TEMPLE OF SETY I, ABYDOS.

darkness, in which a few dim and mighty shapes could be faintly discerned through the clouds. Manetho, the Egyptian historian of Sebennytos, preserved in the few fragments of his story which have survived the names, and a few more or less incredible legends, of the great men who had lived and reigned before the Pyramid-period; but they were only shadows, and the bulk of what little he told us of them was too fantastic to command any respect. The chief figure of his story was the king Menes, or Mena, who was said to have founded Memphis, and who seemed to have some semblance of reality among the pale shades of the others; but even he came to us in Manetho's pages in such a questionable shape as to seem more a figure of romance than of fact.

The discoveries of the closing years of the nineteenth century, however, have put an end to all that vagueness, and while our knowledge about the earliest dynastic kings of Egypt is still scanty enough, it is quite solid and real as far as it goes. Not only so, but excavation has resulted in the extension of knowledge to the period before the rise of the earliest dynastic rulers, and such a mass of material has been accumulated bearing on the life of the pre-dynastic Egyptians as to justify Professor Peet's statement, "it may reasonably be said that we are as well acquainted with the material civilisation of this era as with that of any other in Egyptian history, though at the same time it has to be admitted that our knowledge of its actual history amounts to practically nothing."

With the pre-dynastic tombs, however, and with their comparatively meagre provision for the dead, we have not to do at present. All that need be said is that the pre-dynastic Egyptian buried his dead in a shallow pit cut in the sand or the soft rock, the body being laid on its side in a crouching posture, the knees drawn up towards the chin, and the hands placed in a supplicating attitude before the face. Around the dead man, who was often covered with a reed mat, were placed the vases for food and drink, the various utensils, flint knives, ivory tablets, and suchlike things which were held to be necessary or useful for him in the life beyond, and above all the carved slate palette which was used for grinding the green face-paint in which the early Egyptian delighted, and the material for making the paint itself.

From these early tombs we have learned that the pre-dynastic Egyptian was far from being an uncultured savage. His funerary equipment, primitive as it is in some respects, shows us that he had already acquired the rudiments of that art of representing human and animal form which was to be carried to such remarkable heights in the dynastic period; he was an accomplished potter, whose vessels, though he was as yet ignorant of the potter's wheel, are so perfectly moulded by hand that the absence of the wheel is no loss, and who "belonged to one of those rare and happy periods when the craftsman seems incapable of an error of taste, and in consequence almost every form that leaves his hands is a thing of beauty"; and he had an

inexhaustible patience and an amazing skill in the working of vessels of the hardest stone which make the pre-dynastic hard stoneware the standard of quality by which all succeeding periods are judged.

The disclosure of the tombs of the true early dynastic period, as distinguished from the earlier tombs which we have been describing, was to come from the Holy City of ancient Egypt—Abydos. The reason for the fact that the royal tombs of this period are to be found in the neighbourhood of a town which was never the capital of the land, and not at such important cities as Memphis or Thebes, is, of course, that Abydos had a sanctity to which no other place in Egypt could lay claim, as the burial-place of the head of the God of the Resurrection, Osiris, after his slaughter and dismemberment by Set. Osiris was not the original god of the dead at Abydos, for there existed, long before his supremacy, the worship of a local god Khenti—" The First of the Westerners," whose place Osiris usurped, or rather with whom he was identified. But from a very early date Osiris was supreme at Abydos. Every devout Egyptian desired to be buried, if possible, at Abydos, and as close as might be to the burial-place of the God of the Resurrection ; if actual burial was impossible, as in the vast majority of cases, the next best thing was to be allowed to set up a memorial slab in the neighbourhood, or to make a pilgrimage, even after death, to the Holy City, before being laid in the less holy ground elsewhere ; while if none of these expedients was feasible, at least

one could send a little votive vase of common pottery, and have it laid near to the sacred site. Accordingly the Necropolis at Abydos is full of memorials of all periods of Egyptian history, and in particular the ground is so crowded with broken pottery of all ages and types that the Arabs call the place " Umm el-Ga'ab," " The Mother of Pots."

It was on this site that M. Amélineau began his excavations in 1895, continuing them till the spring of 1898. He discovered several large chamber tombs, which contained many articles of exquisite workmanship, vases, and plaques in fine stone and in pottery, ebony and ivory tablets, bearing inscriptions in archaic hieroglyphics, and evidence that the tombs had belonged to kings of Egypt earlier in date than the period of the Pyramid-builders. In particular he found the tomb of a king whose name he read as Khent, and whom he identified with Osiris himself, as one of the titles of the god is " Khent-Amenti." In January, 1898, he found in this tomb part of a skull which he conjectured to be the skull of the god, and on the same day his workmen unearthed a granite bier of familiar Egyptian shape to which he gave the name of " The Bed of Osiris."

Had these attributions been established M. Amélineau's discoveries, important enough in themselves, would have been absolutely unique in character. But the somewhat acrimonious discussion which followed the announcement of the finds, established the fact that though he had discovered the tomb of one of the earliest kings

of Egypt it was the tomb of a man, and not of a god. The Bed of Osiris proved to be a New Empire copy of some more ancient bier placed there by Egyptians who had made the same mistake as the modern explorer, and imagined that they were restoring the actual tomb of the god of the Underworld. The great discovery thus failed to produce the effect which its importance deserved, and rather cast ridicule upon the possibility of retrieving for serious history the period of the earliest dynasties. M. Amélineau shortly afterwards abandoned his uncompleted task, believing that the site was completely worked out, and for a time Abydos remained without any further attempts to unravel its mysteries.

In the winter of 1899–1900, however, Professor Flinders Petrie began work on the abandoned site, and the results of his patient and skilful study have been of supreme importance for the reconstruction of this earliest period of the history of the ancient Egyptian kingdom. He not only found in the tombs already discovered a great quantity of valuable material, but added considerably to the number of known tombs, and planned with the utmost care all those which came to light. In the main, these royal tombs of the earliest dynasties proved to conform to a single type, though the variations in size and in the number of apartments are considerable. Generally speaking, there is a large central chamber, dug in the soil, and sometimes approached by a stairway. This chamber, which we may believe to have been the actual royal sepulchre, is lined, and sometimes floored, with

wood, though in some instances the flooring is of stone, in one case of granite, the earliest known examples of stonework. Around the central chamber are grouped smaller cells, in which were stored the provision for the use of the dead king in the Underworld, or where the bodies of his favourites who were doomed to accompany him in his dark journey were laid after they had been slain during his funeral rites.

The great tomb of King Kha-sekhem of the IInd Dynasty, 223 feet by 54 feet, is unique in the fact that its central chamber, 10 feet by 17 feet, and nearly 6 feet deep, is entirely built of stone, and is the earliest known example of a piece of mason-work. Each tomb, when it was completed and occupied, was roofed with wooden beams, and above it the sand was piled in a low mound, the precursor of the great stone burial mounds which were to appear ere long when the pride of the IVth Dynasty monarchs was no longer content with anything less than a pyramid for its memorial. Above the tomb a pair of grave-steles bearing the king's name were placed, so that the royal cemetery of Abydos must have presented an appearance not unlike that of a modern churchyard with its mounds and its headstones.

No royal bodies, of course, were found in these earliest tombs. Time and the tomb-robber had done their work too well for that, and the art of mummification was as yet unknown. At a very early date the tombs had been rifled, and some of them burned, no doubt in the process of disposing of the bodies after they had

been plundered, as the Ramesside robber disposed of the mummy of Sebek-em-saf. The most unquestionably personal relic discovered was the shrivelled arm of the queen of King Zer, which had been stolen by some robber who had not time to carry off his plunder, and had thrust it into a hole in the tomb wall, where it was found, with its four beautiful bracelets still intact, by one of Petrie's workmen. What was left in the tombs is simply what previous robbers had not deemed worth the trouble of carrying away. Yet these pieces of pottery, these broken bits of ivory furniture, these ebony and ivory plaques, with their archaic inscriptions, have proved of inestimable importance; for they have enabled us to fashion in our minds a picture, rude enough, no doubt, and sadly lacking in detail, but unquestionably true in its main outline of the earliest ordered civilisation in the history of the world.

We can see that by 3500 B.C., the very latest date to which the Ist Dynasty can be brought down (Petrie dates it from 5500 B.C.), the Egyptian state, under "The Scorpion," Narmer, or Aha-men, the group of kings who probably stand for the Menes of Manetho's story, had long and completely emerged from the barbarism which swathed the rest of the world save Babylonia, and possibly Crete, and was already thoroughly organised and master of all its own resources. War, which had produced the union of the two sections of the land, the Delta and the Upper Valley, was carried on, not as a matter of chance razzias, but with the movement of great armies which could sweep a whole

populace into their net. The great mace-head of King Narmer records the capture of 120,000 men, 400,000 oxen, and 1,422,000 goats. The same king has in his train a Leader of the Ceremonies, a title which shows that the etiquette of the court was already thoroughly organised, and at an early date the Commander of the Inundation shows by his presence that the Egyptian already realised the importance of this great annual event, which, indeed, was no doubt the compelling cause which resulted in the extraordinarily early growth of organisation in Egypt as compared with other lands.

That the equipment of the royal household was sumptuous and tasteful, and that the personal adornments of the glittering figures who occupied its stage were of the richest material and of the highest artistic quality, even the pitiful relics which have survived are sufficient to assure us. Pharaoh's palace was adorned with vases and bowls of diorite, breccia, rock-crystal, and alabaster, wrought with matchless skill, and ground to translucent thinness; his furniture was of ebony and ivory exquisitely carved and adorned with hammered gold. Nor was the glow of beautiful colour wanting to the picture; for the Egyptian craftsman had already mastered that art of glazing objects with brilliant colour which his successors practised with such satisfying results. The ladies of the court found that the goldsmith was capable of meeting their desire for costly and tasteful jewellery in a fashion that has never been surpassed, and the bracelets of the Queen of Zer, of amethyst,

19. BRACELETS (1st DYNASTY); CHAIN (VIth DYNASTY); GOLD SEAL (VIth DYNASTY); GOLD URÆUS (XIIth DYNASTY).

(From "Arts and Crafts of Ancient Egypt.")

turquoise, lazuli, and gold, are of fine design and astonishingly good workmanship; while the existence of a Court barber is attested by the plait of false hair which was found in the tomb of Zer, and was perhaps worn by the lady of the bracelets.

The art of hieroglyphic writing was already fully established, and though the hieroglyphics are archaic in form, they are quite intelligible. In many of the tombs are found small ivory plaques, "made by the king's carpenter." These are inscribed, each with the records of the events of a single year; so that we have evidence of a regular system of chronicling. The British Museum possesses the lid of the ivory box in which King Semti kept his Great Seal—"The Golden Seal of Judgment of King Den"—so that manifestly official documents were in existence, and had to be authenticated by the royal seal. Of art, nothing on a large scale has survived; but the artist who carved the little ivory statuette of a king (perhaps Semti) wearing the White Crown, and clothed in a long parti-coloured robe, was already, within his limits, a master; and Professor Petrie says of the statuette of Khasekhem of the IInd Dynasty, found at Hierakonpolis, "the art of these figures shows a complete mastery of sculpture, the face being more delicately modelled than almost any later work." Altogether we must conceive of the Court of the earliest Dynastic Kings of Egypt as being organised on a high plane of luxury, and indeed of comparative refinement. There is little that can be called barbaric, save the

possible survival of the custom of slaying the king's favourites to accompany him in his journey through the Underworld.

The results of this exploration of the resting-places of the first buried royalties of Egypt may not in themselves be imposing, when compared with the bewildering wealth of some of the later royal interments; but their importance is not to be measured by mere quantity or richness in the precious metals, but by the fact that they have given to us a revelation of a whole period of human activity which was previously hidden beneath the mists of antiquity. Viewed in this light it becomes apparent that these poor fragments from the tombs of Abydos have a value far exceeding that of many much more gorgeous finds, and scarcely surpassed by the discoveries of any period. They stand, in this respect, on the same level with the revelation of the Minoan civilisation at Knossos, or that of the city-states of Sumer at Lagash.

The search for the buried royalties of Egypt next brings us into touch with the great age of the Pyramid-builders, beginning with Zeser and Seneferu, and extending, with gradually diminishing splendour, down to the last relics of the XIIth Dynasty—a period which has already been dealt with in detail. It is followed by the dark period which witnessed the incursion and supremacy of the Hyksos kings, and the War of Independence—a troubled period from which few relics have survived, though the account of the robbery of the tomb of King Sebek-em-saf of the XIIIth Dynasty, with which

our chapter began, shows that the kings of even these dark days were laid to rest with at least something of the ancient splendour of Egyptian royalty.

When we resume our story, we find that two great changes have taken place, one in the course of the national history, the other in the burial customs with which we have to deal. The centre of gravity of the Empire has shifted from the area south of the Delta, embracing Saqqara, Memphis, and the Fayum, to the great city from which the Theban princes had been directing the struggle against the Hyksos ; and henceforward, throughout all the most brilliant period of Egyptian history, Thebes remains almost exclusively the royal abode, and, particularly for our purpose, the place where the great monarchs of the New Empire were buried in the midst of all their magnificence.

Along with this political change has gone another, which has completely revolutionised the funerary customs consecrated by so long usage. The resting-place of a Pharaoh is no longer marked by a " star-y-pointing Pyramid," with its temple and causeway. The tombs of the great nobles of the Middle Kingdom at Beni Hasan and elsewhere had already been indicating a change in the funerary ideal, and the temple of Mentuhotep at Der el-Bahri, with its combination of pyramid and rock-hewn shrine, may perhaps be looked upon as the compromise between the old ideal and the new. Henceforward the actual tomb and the funerary temple were to be separated by the necessities

of the locality in which the first was situated. The Temple was to stand by itself, free in the open plain on the western bank of the Nile; the Tomb was to be hidden from human knowledge, so far as possible, in a wild and desolate valley of the Libyan hills behind the plain and its girdling cliffs.

On the western bank of the Nile, opposite Thebes, there lies a great bay of the Libyan cliffs, extending for more than two miles from the ruined palace of Amenhotep III and the temple of Ramses III at Medinet Habu on the south, to Drah Abu'l Neggah and the temple of Sety I at Qurneh on the north. From cape to cape of the bay there stretches, like the string of a bow, a row of ruined funerary temples, built by most of the notable Theban Pharaohs. Beyond the line of the string towards the Nile, the two Memnon colossi still keep watch and ward—all that remains of the most gorgeous of all the western temples, reared by the most gorgeous of Theban Pharaohs—Amenhotep III; while between the string and the bow, and clinging close to the curving cliffs, lie the temples of Der el-Medinet and Der el-Bahri. Beyond the northern nock of the bow at Drah Abu'l Neggah, a rugged winding path leads north-westwards into the heart of the hills for about a mile, then turning sharply westwards, it reveals a forked valley, one branch of which is known as the West Valley, and the other and more important as the East Valley. Together these two ravines make up the Biban el-Moluk, or Valley of the Kings, the most famous place of

20. ENTRANCE TO THE VALLEY OF THE KINGS, THEBES.

royal sepulture in the world, where for a thousand years the kings of the earliest of world-empires were laid " all of them in glory, everyone in his own house."

They chose for their resting-place one of the wildest and most barren scenes which it is possible to imagine, a sun-scorched wilderness of rock and tumbled stone, where the heat, reverberated from rock to rock under a sky of brass, is like that of Nebuchadnezzar's furnace. But it was not beauty or richness that they were seeking when they came to the Valley of the Kings ; it was the security which not even the Great Pyramid had been able to give to the mighty dead. The loneliness and desolation of the place were the very things which prompted its selection ; for they sought—how vainly the future was to show—a place where human foot had never trod, and where they might expect that their long sleep would be unbroken by any intruder. The sacrilegious attempts of the type of robber who had scattered to the winds the dust of Khufu they foresaw, and tried, though with only imperfect success, to guard against ; what they could not foresee was the advent of the scientific excavator, with a patience which rivals and a skill which far surpasses that of the native plunderer, whose work has put the crown on the lengthy demonstration of the futility of all their pathetic efforts at security.

The type of tomb which is characteristic of the Valley of the Kings is simple enough in its general idea, though its development is sometimes complex enough. An entrance gallery is

driven into the rock sloping downwards, the passage-way being sometimes an inclined plane, sometimes a stairway. This corridor is sometimes interrupted by a deep pit, possibly meant to catch any water which might flow in through the doorway, but more probably to render the task of the robber more difficult. Beyond the pit, the passage is continued, and gives access to chambers and halls varying in number and size, until at last the sarcophagus chamber is reached. Of this general type there are all varieties, from the simplicity of such a tomb as that of Tutankhamen, with its short entrance passage, and its scanty provision of poorly decorated rooms, to the complexity of the tombs of Ramses III or Sety I, with their hundreds of feet of corridor and chamber, brilliantly decorated with the finest art which their time could produce.

The decoration of the royal tombs, though often of high quality artistically, is generally of a sombre and gloomy character, differing in this from the brilliant pictures of life which are characteristic of the Old Kingdom tombs of the nobles at Saqqara, or even from some of the private tombs, such as those of Nekht and Rekh-ma-ra at Thebes. Generally speaking, the leading conception is that the dead king, accompanied by the sun-god or identified with him, sails in the bark of Ra through the Underworld, bringing light as he passes. On his voyage he is accompanied by all manner of spirits and genii, which ward off the enemies of the soul from the divine boat. The subjects of the illustrations are largely derived from two

books of funerary ritual, *The Book of Him Who is in the Duat* (Underworld), and *The Book of the Gates*, while portions of the *Book of the Dead* are also illustrated.

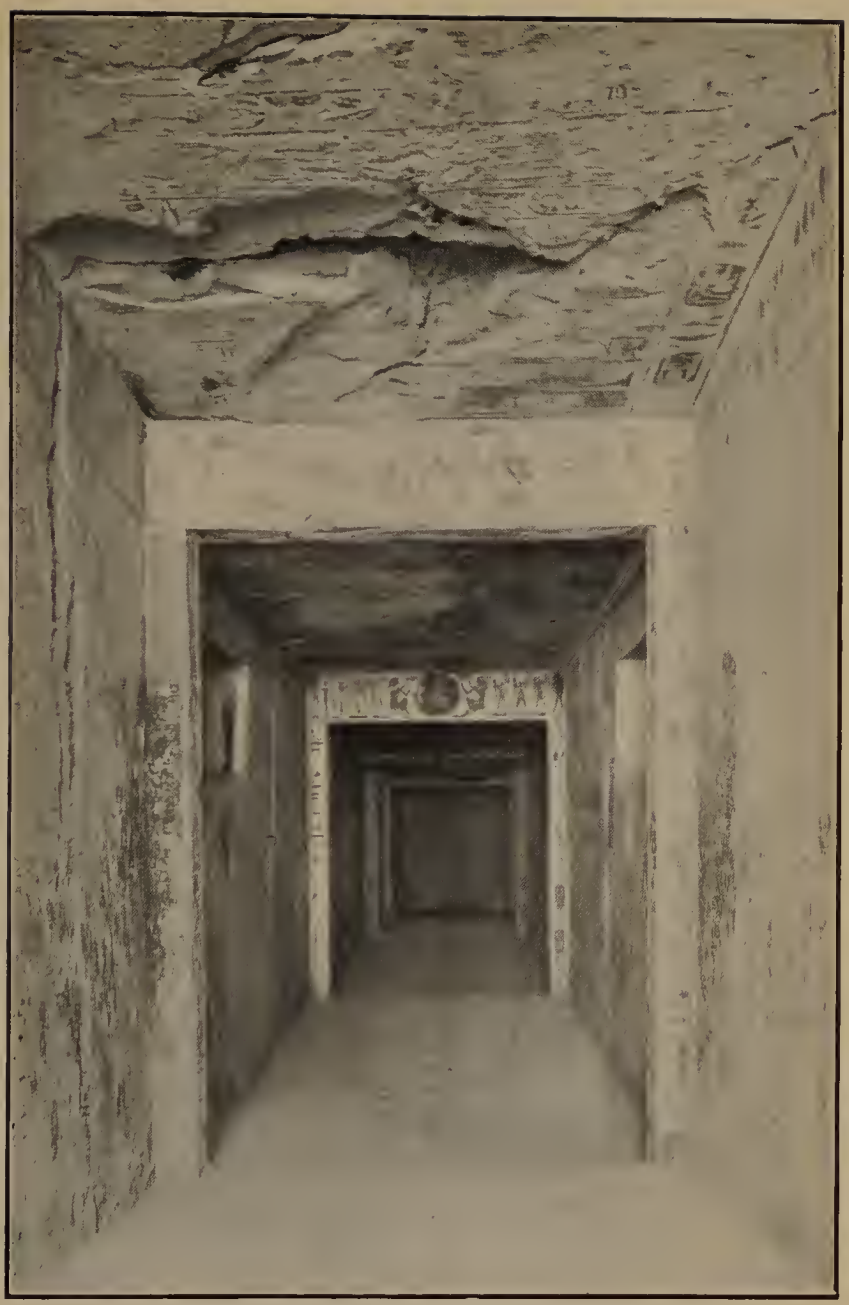
These wonderful tombs have always been more or less known in historic times. Strabo mentions that there were in his time forty tombs worthy of a visit, and we may be sure that the bulk of these had already been long rifled, or at least cleared of their contents to avoid the danger of desecration, before the Egyptian Empire ended its long course. The centuries between the visit of the old geographer and that of the scholars of the French Expedition had brought oblivion to the majority of the tombs, for the French explorers mention only eleven, the others having meanwhile got covered up and forgotten.

It is with the coming of Belzoni on his second journey in 1817 that the modern search for buried Pharaohs may be said to begin, and since his discovery of the tomb of Sety I, the work of finding Pharaohs has gone on for more than a century with more or less success, until at the present time something like sixty tombs have been found, including a few which are not royal, and some which are merely pits. The probability is that few tombs remain to be discovered in the Valley, for most of the great royalties of the Empire have now been accounted for in one way or another.

One chance of some importance, however, remains. The last king whom we know to have been buried in the Valley of the Kings is Ramses XII of the XXth Dynasty. In the great

cache at Der el-Bahri, which will fall to be spoken of shortly, several of the mummies of kings of the XXIst Dynasty were found, along with those of the earlier and more famous lines ; but the actual tombs of the XXIst Dynasty have never yet come to light, and it is possible that some fortunate explorer may yet fall, in one of the desolate valleys among the Libyan hills, on the necropolis of a line of kings who, if they do not fill so great a place in the history of Egypt as their predecessors of the XVIIIth and XIXth Dynasties, were yet sufficiently important to make the discovery of their resting-place a matter of great moment.

It was on October 6 that Belzoni began those excavations in the Valley which resulted in the discovery of what is still the finest example of a royal tomb of the Empire. On the 9th he was fortunate enough to discover two tombs of considerable importance, one of them beautifully painted, the other undecorated, but containing some funerary furniture and two female mummies. " Their hair," says Belzoni, whose summary method of dealing with mummies we have already noticed, " was pretty long, and well-preserved, though it was easily separated from the head by pulling it a little " ! On the 11th, this amazingly fortunate man, who knew so little the greatness of his good fortune, entered another tomb, evidently one of still greater importance, which, with its contents, is dismissed in half a page of his story. " We found a sarcophagus of granite, with two mummies in it, and in a corner a statue standing erect,



21. TOMB OF RAMSES IX, VALLEY OF THE KINGS.

6 feet 6 inches high, and beautifully cut out of sycamore wood ; it is nearly perfect except the nose. We found also a number of little images of wood, well carved, representing symbolical figures. Some had a lion's head, others a fox's, others a monkey's. . . . In the chamber on our right hand we found another statue like the first, but not perfect." Thus summarily Belzoni dismisses a discovery which would make most present-day explorers green with envy. What became of the two mummies, the two funerary statues, and the ushabtis, we are not told, but can easily imagine.

These, however, were only the preliminaries of the great find which was awaiting the lucky excavator. On October 16 he started operations at a point about 15 yards from the tomb already mentioned (which would seem, therefore, to have been that of Ramses I), and in a spot which seemed to his workmen most unlikely to yield anything. On the 17th they struck the first indications of a cutting, and on the next day the entrance of a tomb was laid bare. Before the close of the day Belzoni had penetrated into the tomb as far as the antechamber to the first of its pillared halls, where his progress was interrupted for the time by a pit 30 feet deep, which had to be bridged before he could advance further. Crossing it on the next day, he gained access to the rest of the tomb, and the next three weeks he spent as a man in a dream wandering through the chambers of the great tomb, and recording to the best of his ability the wonders which he had been the first to see

for nearly three thousand years. His attempts at representation of what he saw were imperfect enough, and his nomenclature of the various chambers is merely paltry. Titles like "The Drawing-room," "The Room of Beauties," "The Side-board Room," seem ludicrously out of place amidst the sombre dignity of Sety's sepulchre. Still Belzoni cannot be denied the merits of patience and perseverance, and it was no careless worker who spent a whole twelve-month in the stifling atmosphere of a tomb in the Valley of the Kings taking impressions in wax of all the figures on a tomb which measures 328 feet from end to end.

Belzoni attributed the tomb to Necho and Psamtek II of the XXVIth Dynasty, finding evidence to his satisfaction of the attribution in a procession on the walls, in which he saw Persians, Jews, and Ethiopians, all of whom, according to him, "Nichao and Psammethis" had conquered. He was thus a matter of seven hundred years out in his dating of his discovery, for the tomb is that of Sety I of the XIXth Dynasty, and a monument of the art of the New Empire just at that point when it had passed its zenith, and was trembling on the verge of the decadence, though still capable of the wonders of Abydos, which are rivalled by some of the work here. Sety himself, of course, he did not find in the magnificent alabaster sarcophagus which stood in one of the pillared halls of the tomb. Luckily, when we think of how the explorer would probably have treated him, that honourable king and valiant soldier had long

centuries before been removed from his splendid underground palace to the obscurer but safer hiding-place where he was discovered in our own time, and treated with a little more reverence than he would have received from Belzoni; but his sarcophagus was in itself a prize more than sufficient to reward the excavator for all the labour he had spent.

"It is a sarcophagus," says the lucky discoverer, "of the finest Oriental alabaster, 9 feet 5 inches long, and 3 feet 7 inches wide. Its thickness is only 2 inches; and it is transparent, when a light is placed in the inside of it. It is minutely sculptured within and without with several hundred figures, which do not exceed 2 inches in height. . . . I cannot give an idea of this beautiful and invaluable piece of antiquity, and can only say that nothing has been brought into Europe from Egypt that can be compared with it." He was not far wrong in his enthusiastic estimate of the artistic value of his find, as anyone who has seen the exquisite piece of carving in the Soane Museum will admit.

The fame of Belzoni's discovery was not long in reaching the ears of the Turkish officials, and ere long the chief local authority, Hamed Aga of Keneh, appeared upon the scene with a troop of cavalry, having been so eager over the find that he had made the journey in thirty-six hours instead of forty-eight. It was no love for antiquity, however, which had brought him. All the artistic wonders of the tomb were lost on him and his following; but they ransacked every corner of the tomb with great eagerness.

After a long search the Aga dismissed his soldiers, and turning to Belzoni, he revealed the true object of his anxiety. "Pray, where have you put the treasure?" he said. Belzoni's denial of the existence of any such thing was met with an incredulous smile. "I have been told," said this characteristic specimen of Turkish officialdom, "by a person to whom I can give credit, that you have found in this place a large golden cock filled with diamonds and pearls. I must see it. Where is it?" The explorer at length succeeded in convincing the Aga that there was nothing to lay hands on, and with supreme disgust he rose to leave the tomb. Belzoni asked him what he thought of the beautiful figures which surrounded him. "He just gave a glance at them, quite unconcerned, and said, 'This would be a good place for a harem, as the women would have something to look at.'" Thirty years later, Layard's experience of the Turkish official was almost identical with that of Belzoni.

Forty-two years elapsed before anything of importance was added to our knowledge of the buried royalties of Egypt. It was in 1859 that the beautiful jewellery of Queen Aah-hotep was rescued by Mariette from the hands of the worthy successor of Hamed Aga, as has already been told. But it was not till 1881 that there occurred the first of those amazing resurrections of the Theban Pharaohs which since then have been repeated on several occasions, culminating with the discovery of the most splendid of all royal burials in the tomb of Tutankhamen.

The story of the 1881 find is one of the romances of excavation, though the credit of it, if there is any, goes, not to the scientific explorer, but to the native practitioner of the gentle art of tomb-robbery. It was in 1876 that evidence began to accumulate, in the shape of various papyri and other articles of XXIst Dynasty date which appeared mysteriously on the market, that the fellahs of Sheikh Abd el-Qurneh had somehow or other gained access to some royal tomb of that period. The Service of Antiquities took the matter up, and suspicion fell on the members of a family named Abd-er-Rassoul. In April, 1881, Maspero arrested with his own hand Ahmed, one of the members of the family, and committed him to the tender mercies of Daoud Pasha, the third Mudir of Keneh who has appeared in this chapter, but who, unlike his predecessors, comes in on this occasion on the side of the angels, so to speak. Justice, in the Egypt of the eighties, had ways and means of arriving at its ends which seem strange to mere Occidentals, and Maspero covers a good deal in his simple statement that Daoud Pasha carried on the investigation "with his habitual severity." The Ramesside inspectors, in 1100 B.C., put things more bluntly—"They were beaten with sticks both on their hands and feet" —but probably the facts were not very different in the modern trial. The only result was to produce a flood of testimony that Ahmed Abd-er-Rassoul "never had excavated, and never would excavate, that he was incapable of misappropriating the tiniest antiquity, to say nothing

of violating a royal tomb," and the spotless victim of oppression had to be liberated "provisionally." "The vigour with which the inquiry had been conducted by Daoud Pasha" had, however, impressed the mind of one of the Abd-er-Rassoul family with the conviction that there are cases where honesty, or the best possible imitation of it, is the best policy. Mohammed Ahmed Abd-er-Rassoul came secretly to the Mudir, made a clean breast, or at least a breast as clean as was convenient, to that Rhadamanthus, and on July 5, 1881, Emile Brugsch Bey, representing the Service of Antiquities, at last found the truth about the business, as usual, at the bottom of a well.

He was led by the penitent sinner Mohammed to a lonely spot at the foot of the Libyan cliffs, not far from Hatshepsut's famous temple at Der el-Bahri. There, after a long climb up the hillside, and the scaling of a high cliff, he found behind a great rock the mouth of a black shaft about 6 feet square, the well of the unfinished tomb of Queen Astemkheb of the XXIst Dynasty; and the story of his experiences may best be told by himself.

"Finding Pharaoh was an exciting experience for me. It is true I was armed to the teeth, and my faithful rifle, full of shells, hung over my shoulder; but my assistant from Cairo, Ahmed Effendi Kemal, was the only person with me whom I could trust. Any one of the natives would have killed me willingly, had we been alone, for everyone of them knew better than I did that I was about to deprive them of a great

source of revenue. But I exposed no sign of fear, and proceeded with the work. The well cleared out, I descended, and began the exploration of the underground passage."

There are many types of courage; but surely not the least remarkable is that of the man of science who allows himself to be lowered on an Arab rope, down a 40-feet shaft, to explore a dark gallery of the dead, while the rope which is his only link with life and light is held above by a man who would cheerfully have left him to keep unending vigil beside the Pharaohs whom he was seeking.

Mohammed's penitence, however, or perhaps we had better say, his respect for Daoud Pasha's "habitual severity," kept him true, and Brugsch had no other terrors to face than those of his strange task. "Soon," he says, "we came upon cases of porcelain funeral offerings, metal and alabaster vessels, draperies and trinkets, until, reaching the turn in the passage, a cluster of mummy-cases came to view in such number as to stagger me. Collecting my senses, I made the best examination of them I could by the light of my torch, and at once saw that they contained the mummies of royal personages of both sexes; and yet that was not all. Plunging on ahead of my guide, I came to the chamber, and there, standing against the walls, or lying on the floor, I found even a greater number of mummy-cases of stupendous size and weight. Their gold coverings and their polished surfaces so plainly reflected my own excited visage that it seemed as though I was looking into the faces of my

own ancestors. The gilt face on the coffin of the amiable Queen Nefertari seemed to smile upon me like an old acquaintance." "The fellahs," says Maspero, "had unearthed a catacomb crammed with Pharaohs." Among the mummies were those of several of the most famous Pharaohs of the New Empire, Seqenen-Ra, the hero of the War of Independence, Amenhotep I, and Queen Aahmes Nefertari, Thothmes II, and Thothmes III, the greatest soldier of Egyptian history, Sety I, Ramses II, and Ramses III, the most famous kings of the XIXth and XXth Dynasties, Pinezem I and Pinezem II of the XXIst Dynasty, Queen Hent-taui, Queen Nezem-Mut, and others.

The question of the removal to a place of security of this astonishing mass of dead royalty presented its own difficulties. The removal had to be as speedy as possible, for now that the secret was out every hour would add to the danger of a violent attack on the shaft, and the dispersal for ever of its previous treasures. Yet the problem of removal was no easy one. The spot where the shaft lies is lonely and difficult of access; and the coffins of some of the kings and queens were of huge size and corresponding weight. That of Queen Aahmes Nefertari, for instance, is 10 feet long, and required sixteen men to lift it.

"Early the next morning," says Brugsch, "three hundred Arabs were employed under my direction—each one a thief. One by one the coffins were hoisted to the surface, were securely sewed up in sailcloth and matting, and then were

carried across the plain of Thebes to the steamers awaiting them at Luxor."

It took six days of hard labour, under the blazing sun of an Egyptian July, before the tomb was cleared; and then three days more were spent in waiting for the Museum steamboat to arrive. Brugsch must have been an anxious man as he watched the efforts of the three hundred professional tomb-robbers from whose hands he was snatching what they regarded as their legitimate prey; and no doubt he heaved a sigh of genuine relief when, on July 20, he handed over his precious freight to the Museum at Boulak, and was delivered from the burden of royalty. Sir Gaston Maspero has told us how all along the Nile, from Luxor to Quft, both banks of the river were covered with frantic crowds of fellahs, the women tearing their hair and wailing, the men firing rifles, as they followed the downstream progress of the steamer bearing the mummies. So, no doubt, only without the rifles and the steam, their ancestors had followed the funeral barks which bore across the river the dead bodies of these mighty kings three thousand years before!

The very richness of the find proved somewhat of an embarrassment to the authorities at the Cairo Museum, and it was several years before the results of Brugsch's great haul of Pharaohs were properly sorted out and classified. It was not till May, 1886, that the unwrapping of the mummies began, and the task was only completed in the end of June. The figure of supreme interest was that of Ramses II, who

was then believed to be the Pharaoh of the Oppression of the Israelites, and who was then taken more at the estimate of his own overweening vanity than he is at present. The mummy of the great king was solemnly unwrapped in the presence of an illustrious gathering, the Khedive of Egypt himself verifying the existence of the later inscription of the priests of the XXIst Dynasty on the wrappings around the body, before the process of unwrapping began. The state of the mummy agreed with the historical evidence as to the length of the reign of Ramses. The king must have been nearly one hundred years old when he died, and his body bears the marks of extreme old age.

"The mummy," says Maspero, "is thin, much shrunken, and light; the bones are brittle, and the muscles atrophied, as one would expect in the case of a man who had attained the age of a hundred; but the figure is still tall and of perfect proportions. The mask of the mummy gives a fair idea of that of the living king; the somewhat unintelligent expression, slightly brutish perhaps, but haughty and firm of purpose, displays itself with an air of royal majesty beneath the sombre materials used by the embalmer."

The hero of the battle of Kadesh must in his prime have been a man of large and powerful frame. "Even after the coalescence of the vertebræ and the shrinkage produced by mummification, his mummy still measures over 5 feet 8 inches"; so that we may picture him as a formidable figure over 6 feet in height, perhaps nearer 7 feet with the high war helmet of the

Pharaohs crowning his head, as he charged with arrow drawn to the head, in his rattling war-chariot upon the Hittite ranks. His conduct at Kadesh suggests a good trooper, but a dull general, and his mummy does nothing to cause a revision of the judgment.

An infinitely nobler figure was that of the father of Ramses, Sety I, whose mummy was also found in the *cache*. "The fine kingly head was exposed to view," says Maspero. "It was a masterpiece of the art of the embalmer, and the expression of the face was that of one who had only a few hours previously breathed his last. Death had slightly drawn the nostrils and contracted the lips, the pressure of the bandages had flattened the nose a little, and the skin was darkened by the pitch; but a calm and gentle smile still played over the mouth, and the half-open eyelids allowed a glimpse to be seen from under their lashes of an apparently moist and glistening line, the reflection from the white porcelain eyes let in to the orbit at the time of burial." The somewhat gruesome art of the Egyptian embalmer reached its culmination in this extraordinary piece of work, and while to our minds the whole practice verges upon, if it does not overstep, the limits of the decent into the realm of the horrible, we may admit that it comes as near as possible to the attainment of what Professor Elliot Smith tells us was the aim of the embalmer—"to make the representation of the dead man so life-like that he should, in fact, remain alive." We should never have known how noble and dignified a type the

aristocratic Egyptian of 1300 B.C. had attained had it not been for the preservation of the grand head of Sety, which teaches us that the sculptor of the exquisite reliefs of Abydos was doing no more than bare justice to his king when he carved the delicate beauty which charms us to-day.

If the beauty of Sety's face almost justified both the morbid skill which sought to deny the reality of death and the curiosity which unveiled the secrets of the grave, the same cannot be said of the mummy of Seqenen-Ra, not the least interesting of the grim assemblage. There are few things more ghastly than the head of the old hero of the Expulsion of the Hyksos, with three gaping wounds on skull and face, and the teeth clenched, in the death-agony, upon the mangled tongue. Yet even this grim evidence of a violent death on the field of battle seems to bring the reality of that ancient struggle in which the Pharaoh died more forcibly home to the imagination.

A still more horrible figure of nightmare was that of the unnamed person whose contorted limbs and writhen countenance suggested to Maspero the most ghastly of all suspicions as to how he met his end. "It makes one's flesh creep to look at it," says Maspero, speaking of this mummy; "the hands and feet are tied by strong bands, and are curled up as if under an intolerable pain; the abdomen is drawn up, the stomach projects like a ball, the chest is contracted, the head is thrown back, the face is contorted in a hideous grimace, the retracted lips expose the teeth, and the mouth is open as if

to give utterance to a last despairing cry. The conviction is borne in upon us that the man was invested while still alive with the wrappings of the dead." Others have suggested a less horrible interpretation of the condition of the figure. In the report of the trial which took place in the reign of Ramses III of individuals accused of a conspiracy against the life of the king it is significantly said of some of those whose guilt was established, "They died of themselves," and the suggestion has been made that this figure, whose contortions might well be due to the action of an irritant poison, is that of one of these involuntary suicides. In either case, the thing is sufficiently horrible, and hints, not obscurely, at that darker aspect of Oriental Court life which lay beneath all the glitter and splendour of the Theban palace.

The find of Der el-Bahri was followed, in 1894–5, by the discoveries of M. de Morgan at Dahshur, which have given us the exquisite jewellery of the XIIth and XIIIth Dynasty already alluded to in our chapter on the Pyramids. And then, in 1898, M. Loret discovered in the Valley of the Kings the tomb of Amenhotep II, son of the great conqueror Thothmes III.

Until the great discovery of last year threw all others into the shade, this discovery of M. Loret was unique, for the mummy of Amenhotep was found still resting in its coffin under the gold-starred and blue-painted roof of the funerary chamber—the first Pharaoh who had ever been found sleeping in the tomb where he was laid. His own records tell us of his prowess. "He

is a king very weighty of arm," so the inscription of the Amada and Elephantine steles runs; "there is not one who can draw his bow among his army, among the hill-country sheikhs, or among the princes of Retenu, because his strength is so much greater than that of any king who has ever existed." In later days this boast of the old Pharaoh got twisted into the curious legend which Herodotus records of the king of Ethiopia who challenged Cambyses to draw his bow. The redoubtable weapon itself, strange to say, was found in the tomb along with its owner. It bore the inscription: "Smiter of the Cave-dwellers, overthrower of Kush, hacking up their cities . . . the great wall of Egypt, protector of his soldiers." Amenhotep was still wrapped in his shroud and adorned with garlands; but the tomb had been ruthlessly plundered in ancient days, and little of artistic value was found. One of the side-chambers of the tomb, however, yielded a store of Pharaohs, only second in importance to the great find of Der el-Bahri. Here were gathered nine royal mummies, among them those of Thothmes IV, Amenhotep III, Siptah, Ramses IV, Ramses V, and Ramses VI. Most interesting of all, in view of the idea then prevalent of the date of the Exodus, was the discovery, along with these, of the mummy of Merenptah, who was held to be the Pharaoh of the Exodus. The absence of Merenptah from the royal gathering at Der el-Bahri was explained by interested but casual readers of Scripture by the fact that of course he was drowned in the Red Sea. The narrative of Exodus, of course,

makes no such statement, and Merenptah duly appeared, though the interest attaching to him has somewhat waned with the progress of the view that the Exodus took place two hundred years before his reign.

The fate of the tomb of Amenhotep is suggestive of the difficulties which meet the explorer in his attempt to preserve for science and to treat with proper reverence the relics of the past which he unearths. The great king was left in his coffin, with a few articles of his funerary furniture beside him. The result was that in spite of the armed guard which is maintained in the Valley of the Kings, or perhaps with the complicity of the guard, the tomb was rifled in 1901, the mummy of the Pharaoh tumbled out on the floor, and the model boat which had been left beside the king stolen.

With the suggestion that Tutankhamen should be allowed to rest in the midst of the splendours which accompanied him to the grave, everyone must sympathise ; the question is, will he be allowed to rest in peace, no matter what the precautions which may be taken, in the midst of a people with whom tomb-robbery is a profession of six thousand years standing, and who know the matchless value of the treasure which lies within their reach ? Whatever the decision, it may be hoped that if the mummy of the last king in the direct line of the great XVIIIth Dynasty be found beneath his gorgeous canopy it will not be made the subject of a vulgar show, as is done with that of Amenhotep II.

In 1902 the work of excavation in the Valley

of the Kings was undertaken by an American, Mr. Theodore M. Davis, or rather the funds for the work were provided by Mr. Davis, while the actual work of excavation was carried on by officials of the Service of Antiquities, first Mr. Howard Carter, then Mr. Weigall, and Mr. Ayrton. In 1903 Mr. Carter found the tomb of Thothmes IV, son of Amenhotep II, and father of Amenhotep III. His mummy had already been found in the tomb of his father, but many articles of funerary furniture, mostly broken, were found, including the embossed leather front of a state chariot, with decoration in gesso. Between 1902 and 1912, the work financed by Mr. Davis was crowned with the most astonishing success. In these years were found the tombs of Queen Hatshepsut, King Siptah, Akhenaten (or rather the tomb of Queen Tiy, with the mummy of Akhenaten), Horemheb, Prince Mentuherkhepshef, and, above all, the tomb which, though its occupants were not of royal rank, proved yet the richest and the most interesting which was ever discovered, till it was outclassed by that of Tutankhamen—the tomb of Yuaa and Tuau.

It was in February, 1905, that the workmen of Mr. Davis struck the first indication of the tomb in the shape of a well-cut stone step, which promised to prove the first of a flight descending to a tomb-passage. By February 12 the door was cleared, and the next day Mr. Davis, with the late Sir Gaston Maspero and Mr. Weigall, penetrated with some difficulty into the tomb-chamber, and the little party found themselves in the presence, not only of two of the most

interesting personalities of Egyptian history, but also of the most wonderful collection of funerary furniture which, up to that time, had ever rewarded the explorer. Their delight was very nearly turned to tragedy before they had begun to realise the importance of their find. In his eagerness to inspect the funeral sledge, on which Maspero had just read the famous name of Yuaa, Mr. Davis stooped with his candle close to the bitumen-covered woodwork, and was pulled back just in time. One touch of the flame on the pitch, and the corridors of the tomb would have been a roaring tunnel of flame, in which Yuaa, his funerary equipment, and his discoverers would probably all have perished together.

The danger once realised, candles were discarded, and electric light led into the tomb. And then the explorers began to realise the full wonder of their discovery. The tomb was full of furniture of the finest and most careful workmanship. Armchairs carved and inlaid, coffers of wood inlaid and enamelled with that wonderful blue of which the Egyptians had the secret, boxes of painted wood, with figures in gilt gesso, designed to hold the canopic jars which contain the viscera of the dead, ushabti figures, some of them plated with gold or silver, wicker-work baskets for holding perfume bottles, couches of elegant design, a perfectly preserved specimen of the type of light chariot in which the Theban noble of the Empire took his airing, cushions stuffed with down, still soft and resilient after three millenniums, costly alabaster vases, toilet articles of all sorts, and a plentiful supply of the

mummified meats which the dead might require for their journey through the Underworld ; the chamber was a storehouse of all that the Egyptian deemed desirable for his use in this life or the next. Nor were the needs of the spirit neglected. There stood the magical figures by whose help the occupants of the tomb were to make their way through the dark paths of the Duat, inscribed with the " Chapter of the Flame," or the " Chapter of the Magical Figure of the North Wall " ; while a great roll of papyrus 22 yards long contained other prayers which would assist the sleepers to conquer all the dangers of their long road. Never had such an assemblage of beautiful and curious things rewarded the seeker even in this land of beautiful and curious things.

Fascinating as the treasures of the tomb were, however, the main interest was not in them, but in the two gilded coffins in which the owners of all this wealth lay quietly sleeping their long sleep. " First above Yuaa and then above his wife the electric lamps were held, and as one looked down into their quiet faces there was almost the feeling that they would presently open their eyes and blink at the light. The stern features of the old man commanded one's attention, and again and again our gaze was turned from this mass of wealth to this sleeping figure in whose honour it had been placed there." For these two silent tenants of the tomb were the man and woman to whose influence, in all probability, was due not a little of that great religious revolution which in a few years altered the whole course of Egyptian history, and swayed

the balance of the destinies of the Ancient East. Prince Yuaa and his wife Tuau were the father and mother of that famous Queen Tiy, whose sway over the mind of her husband Amenhotep III prepared the way for the supremacy of that new spiritual faith of which her son, the ill-fated Akhenaten, was in the fulness of time to be the exponent and champion, and whose failure broke his heart in the midst of the downfall of the empire to which he had vainly attempted to teach the creed of the Brotherhood of Man. To few people has it been given to exercise so great an influence upon the course of history as to these two quiet figures whose rest was broken after 3300 years by the representatives of three nations whose ancestors were outer barbarians when Prince Yuaa and his wife were foremost figures in the most glittering court of the Ancient East.

Two years later, the work of Mr. Davis resulted in another discovery, less important from the point of view of the wealth of funerary furniture involved, for in this case there was little found, but even more interesting in view of the personality whose mummy occupied the tomb. The site of the new find was at the corner of the ravine leading to the well-known tomb of Sety I, and was covered with gravel and loose stones. "After some days of hard work, the regular rectangle of a pit appeared upon the soil, then two or three steps appeared, followed by a staircase open to the sky, a door, a narrow passage, and a wall of rock-work and beaten earth. The seals affixed by the guardians, more

than thirty centuries before, were still intact on the lime-wash." Breaking them on January 6, 1907, Mr. Davis and Mr. Weigall penetrated into a narrow passage, which was almost blocked by two panels of gilded wood, which had once formed part of a funeral canopy, like that of Tutankhamen. Wriggling past these with difficulty, they entered a roughly hewn and quite undecorated chamber, on the floor of which lay a few earthen pots, some alabaster ornaments, and a number of amulets. But the sight which arrested the eye was that of the coffin, which, at the first glance, seemed in the glare of the electric light to be made of massy gold. "It seemed," says Maspero, "as if all the gold of ancient Egypt glittered and gleamed in that narrow space." The news of a wonderful discovery of treasure spread far and wide through the neighbourhood, growing as it spread, till the report had reached such fabulous proportions that it was necessary to place a guard over the tomb to prevent an assault. Of course it was more seeming than reality, for the gold turned out to be mere gold-foil, and the tomb was in reality singularly poor in objects of value. The coffin had originally been placed upon a bier of the usual form; but this had decayed, and the heavy coffin had fallen, and its lid had come off in the fall, exposing the head and feet of its tenant, from which the bandages had decayed. The body was wrapped in sheets of gold-foil, and the inscription on the coffin, worked in semi-precious stones, gave the title of Akhenaten, "the beautiful child of the Sun."

Such a discovery was, of course, most unexpected ; for Akhenaten had made his capital, not at Thebes, which he hated, but at Tell el-Amarna, where he had declared his intention to be buried, and where his tomb was known. Besides, the inscription on the funeral canopy stated that Akhenaten had made it for his mother Queen Tiy. The explorers therefore concluded that they had indeed discovered the tomb, part of the funeral furniture, and the skeleton (it cannot be called a mummy) of Queen Tiy, and in this belief they sent the broken fragments of the skeleton to Professor Elliot Smith for examination, only to be informed by him that what they had sent was not the body of an old woman, but of a young man, who, if normal, which was doubtful, could not have been much older than twenty-six when he died. There seems in fact to be little doubt that the skeleton which was discovered in the tomb of Tiy was that of the man whose action in one direction and inaction in another changed the destiny of the ancient world in one of the most critical periods of its history. Mr. Davis, strange to say, could never bear the idea that he had found the bones of Akhenaten, though one would have thought that the discovery of the most pathetic and interesting figure of Egyptian history would have put the crown on the satisfaction with which he could justly regard his work. He had set his heart on discovering Queen Tiy, and to have even her far more famous son substituted for her was a bitter disappointment to him.

But how came Akhenaten, the heretic king,

" that criminal of Akhetaten," [1] as the priests of Amen always called him, to be buried, not in his own heretic capital at Tell el-Amarna, but in orthodox Thebes, and in his mother's tomb ? There is, of course, no certain explanation of the facts ; but from what is known of the history of the period an explanation may at least be suggested with a reasonable amount of confidence that it is not very far from the truth. When Akhenaten died, his body was no doubt buried at Tell el-Amarna, as he had decreed. When his son-in-law, Tutankhaten, and his daughter, Ankh. s. en. pa Aten, found the pressure of circumstances too strong for them, and were obliged to return to Thebes, to restore the old religion, and to change their names to Tutankhamen and Ankh. s. en. Amen, they carried with them, doubtless, the body of the reformer, still revered and beloved, and gave it honourable burial in the tomb of Tiy—the most fitting place, since no royal tomb could have been prepared in Thebes. But as time went on, the reactionary priests of Amen became more and more the dominant element in the kingdom, and they had none of the chivalrous spirit which prompted Charles V's " I war not with the dead," at the tomb of Luther. The only way in which they could strike at the dead heretic was also, to an Egyptian mind, the most certain and the most deadly ; they could destroy his hopes of immortality by desecrating his tomb, and blotting out his name from it. So the body of Queen Tiy was removed from the tomb which had been

[1] Akhetaten, the town created by Akhenaten, the man.

polluted by the presence of her son, his name was erased from the inscriptions, and the entrance of the tomb was blocked with stones and sealed with the seal of Tutankhamen. Then the body of " the world's first great idealist and the world's first *individual* " was left in solitude, and, as his enemies fondly believed, in eternal oblivion and shame, to await its resurrection, thirty centuries later, at the hands of a generation which has at least learned to appreciate and to honour the ideals for which he sacrificed so much.

The remarkable success of Mr. Davis in the search for buried royalties was fittingly crowned a year later by the discovery of the tomb of Horemheb, the usurping reactionary who had formerly been a general in the service of Tutankhamen, and who seized the throne after the brief reigns of Tutankhamen and Ay. The tomb had been plundered and wrecked, but the beautiful red granite sarcophagus, 8 feet 11 inches in length by 3 feet 9½ inches in width and 4 feet in depth, was intact. In it were found the bones of one person, but in such a condition that it was impossible to determine the sex of the person to whom they had belonged. In 1906 Mr. Davis made another discovery, this time of an uninscribed chamber nearly filled with mud. The presence in the chamber and in the neighbourhood of a number of articles bearing the names of Tutankhamen and Ankh. s. en. Amen led him to believe that this was the tomb of Tutankhamen, and the sumptuous volume in which he published the results of these last two discoveries was therefore entitled " The Tombs

of Harmhabi and Touatankhamanou." Time and further investigation have proved that in this respect he was wrong, as also in the conviction which he expressed in the book that "the Valley of the Kings is now exhausted." Another discovery was due sixteen years after his last find, which was to prove that the Valley yet held treasures whose beauty and richness could dazzle the world, and make even those of the tomb of Yuaa seem almost paltry by comparison. Yet the work of Mr. Davis remains as one of the most remarkable series of successes which has ever rewarded excavation in Egypt—a fitting prelude to the great find of November, 1922.

CHAPTER VII

TUTANKHAMEN AND HIS SPLENDOURS

WONDERFUL as the results of the work of Mr. Davis and his assistants had been, they were destined to be completely eclipsed by the most remarkable discovery which has ever been made in all the long story of Egyptological research. It may very well prove in the long run that the importance of the find historically is less than that of many less striking discoveries ; but as a revelation of the sheer wealth and artistic quality of the provision which was made three thousand years ago for the journey through the Underworld of even a comparatively obscure and unimportant Pharaoh, there has never been anything to compare with the discovery the news of which was flashed across the world on November 30, 1922. " This afternoon," the message ran, " Lord Carnarvon and Mr. Howard Carter revealed to a large company what promises to be the most sensational Egyptological discovery of the century. The find consists of, among other objects, the funeral paraphernalia of the Egyptian King Tutankhamen, one of the famous heretic kings of the XVIIIth Dynasty, who reverted to Amen

worship." It is not often that newspaper reports err on the side of making too little of their subject ; but as the days and weeks passed on, and what seemed to be an unending procession of marvels defiled from the dark cave in the Valley of the Kings before the astonished eyes of numberless tourists, it became manifest that the half had not been told, and that Egyptology was faced with a wealth of material such as had never before been dealt with, and such as will take many years to appreciate and measure the full significance of. All that can be attempted here is to give a summary account of the find itself, and a brief provisional account of some of the more important of the treasures which have so far been disclosed ; for there can be no doubt that what has been handled is but a fraction of the treasure which still remains to be dealt with when the tomb is reopened and the actual sarcophagus-chamber and its annexe are cleared as the outer chambers have been.

Some great Egyptological discoveries have been the result of a mere happy chance, as was the case in 1887, when a fellah woman, grubbing for phosphates among the rubbish heaps of Akhenaten's ruined capital, found that store of cuneiform tablets which have since become world-famous as " The Tell el-Amarna Tablets," and disposed of her interest in the find to a friend for the sum of two shillings. Some, as in the case of the Der el-Bahri *cache*, have resulted from the watch kept on the illegitimate practitioners of research ; and some, as in the case of Belzoni's discovery of the tomb of Sety I, have

22. GRANITE HEAD OF TUTANKHAMEN, CAIRO MUSEUM.

been made with so little trouble that the wonder is that they were not made long before. But the discovery made by Lord Carnarvon and Mr. Howard Carter fell into none of these categories. It was the result of long and persistent and systematic work, carried on under very disappointing conditions, but with a clear appreciation of the object in view. For sixteen years the two explorers had been working together at Thebes, and already in 1912, they had published the results of their work in *Five Years' Exploration at Thebes*. Their work had not been particularly fruitful, and when seven years ago they took over the abandoned right to work in the Valley of the Kings, their first efforts yielded no very brilliant success. "Mostly disappointments," was Lord Carnarvon's summary of his previous finds. The explorers, however, were proceeding on a plan which was bound to lead to success in the end, if there was anything left to be found, and if their patience, or their resources, held out long enough in the face of a continued monotony of failure. Previous explorers, like Mr. Davis, had proceeded on the method of *sondages*, or trial pits, sinking a pit here and another there in spots which they judged likely. Such a method, obviously, may lead to success very simply and easily; or, on the other hand, it may result in your missing the very spot where the treasure lies. The method adopted by Lord Carnarvon and Mr. Carter was much more thorough, though also much more laborious and monotonous. They systematically cleared the ground over a selected area down to

the virgin rock. The labour involved in such a method of work is, of course, enormous; it is said that the two explorers moved 200,000 tons of rubbish in their researches; but it is plain that there is no chance of missing your object by a foot or two, as is quite possible with the other plan. There may, of course, be nothing in your area at all; but if there is anything, you are bound to get it.

So it proved at last in this case. On the fifth of November, Mr. Carter, who was working on a spot which so far had been untouched because it lay in front of the tomb of Ramses VI, which is one of the regular electrically lighted show-tombs of the Valley, came upon a rock-cut step, which seemed like the beginning of a flight leading to a tomb. He cleared a few more steps, and then came to a door, or rather to a cement-covered wall, blocking a doorway. On the cement of the wall was visible the seal of the royal portion of the Theban necropolis, consisting of a jackal couchant above nine captives in rows of three. When the excavation had reached this stage, Mr. Carter cabled to Lord Carnarvon to come out to Egypt at once, as a fine discovery had been made, and the spot was covered up till his arrival.

The resumption of the excavation showed that in ancient days a thief had broken into the tomb, which had been inspected and sealed by the inspectors of Ramses IX subsequent to his entrance. On the undamaged portion of the wall there could be seen the cartouche of the Pharaoh Tutankhamen, son-in-law and successor

to the famous Akhenaten. After arrangements had been made for protecting the tomb and whatever it might contain from the efforts of the modern successors of the Ramesside thief, the entrance passage, about 8 metres long, was cleared, and another sealed door was reached. It was uncertain whether the explorers would find another staircase or passage behind this new obstacle, or whether it would give access to one of the chambers of the tomb. What followed may best be told in the words of Lord Carnarvon himself:

"I asked Mr. Carter to take out a few stones and have a look in. After a few minutes this was done. He pushed his head partly into the aperture. With the help of a candle he could dimly discern what was inside. A long silence followed, till I said, I fear in somewhat trembling tones, 'Well, what is it?' 'There are some wonderful objects here,' was the welcome reply. Having given up my place to my daughter, I myself went to the hole, and I could with difficulty restrain my excitement. At the first sight, with the inadequate light, all that one could see was what appeared to be gold bars. On getting a little more accustomed to the light it became apparent that there were colossal gilt couches with extraordinary heads, boxes here and boxes there. We enlarged the hole, and Mr. Carter managed to scramble in—the chamber is sunk 2 feet below the bottom of the passage—and then, as he moved around with a candle, we knew that we had found something absolutely unique and unprecedented. Even with the poor

light of the candle one could see a marvellous collection of furniture and other objects in the chamber. There were two life-sized statues of the king, beds, chariots, boxes of all sizes and shapes—some with every sort of inlay, while others were painted—walking sticks, marvellous alabaster vases, and so on. After slightly enlarging the hole we went in, and this time we realised in a fuller degree the extent of the discovery, for we had managed to tap the electric light from the tomb above, which gave us far better illumination for our examination."

Inspection quickly proved that the first revelation was only the beginning of marvels. Beneath one of the state couches a small opening in the wall of the chamber showed where a second chamber opened off the first. This room it was impossible even to enter, for it was crammed to a height of 5 feet with articles of furniture of all descriptions, packed close together in seemingly inextricable confusion. At the one end of the first chamber stood two life-sized statues of the king in bituminised wood with gold adornments, and between them was the evidence that other chambers lay beyond; for this part of the room had been closed with a wall on which the seals of the Ramesside inspectors could still be seen, and in the centre of this wall, on the floor level, there were traces of the fact that a break had once been made in the wall, sufficiently large to admit a small man. This had subsequently been sealed up again, probably by the inspectors of Ramses IX.

Manifestly there was more to follow behind

that sealed wall. In the two chambers which had been seen there was no trace of any sarcophagus, or any evidence whatever of any interment. It was obvious, therefore, that, unless this wonderful mass of artistic craftsmanship was only a *cache* where robbers' loot was gathered, or a gathering of costly material drawn together for safety from robbers, both of which alternatives seemed somewhat unlikely, the real tomb-chamber, with what was in all probability the unimaginable wealth of the great nest of coffins under its canopy, the coffers for the canopic vases, and all the other funerary regalia of a Pharaoh of the Empire, lay beyond the wall which closed the end of the first chamber. In that case, the revelations which awaited the explorers might well be of a kind which would make even the glories which had so far been disclosed look dim and paltry. The explorers must have been sorely tempted to pierce the wall at once, and so arrive at least at some conception of the magnitude of their find; but prudence forbade this. The amount of material already under their hands in the outer chambers was sufficient to occupy all the time of the experts who had gathered to the scene for many weeks. The fabrics concerned were all of them priceless, and some of them were of almost inconceivable delicacy. All of them were at least three thousand years old, and had during all that time been shut up in the still air of a subterranean vault. Until they had been carefully treated with preservatives, and insured, so far as possible, from the risks of exposure to the air and the heat of the upper world, it was

impossible to do anything that would add to the task, already one of great labour and difficulty, which lay upon the explorers and their assistants. Accordingly curiosity was kept in check until the results of the first discovery should be secured, and the opening of what was hoped would prove the first intact royal tomb-chamber ever found in Egypt was deferred for awhile. Meanwhile for weeks the Valley of the Kings was beset, day after day, by throngs of tourists before whose astonished eyes there passed a seemingly endless procession of the marvels of ancient Egyptian craftsmanship of thirty centuries ago, and who seemed to take it as a personal grievance when the articles removed on any particular day were not sufficiently numerous or gorgeous to satisfy their craving for sensation. Tutankhamen became the fashion, and leaped at once into greater prominence than he ever enjoyed during his short and not particularly glorious reign.

When the contents of the outer chamber had been placed in safety, the time came for the breaking of the sealed wall which barred the sarcophagus-chamber from view ; and on February 16 this was at last accomplished in the presence of a distinguished company of Egyptologists, though the formal opening, at which the Queen of the Belgians was present, did not take place till two days later. When it was possible to see through the growing aperture into the inner chamber, the sight revealed was one to take the breath away from the most hardened treasure-hunter. Practically the whole chamber was filled, from end to end, and side to side, by

23. DECORATION FROM A THEBAN TOMB.

an object which no man has seen intact for more than three millenniums—the funerary canopy or shrine of an Egyptian Pharaoh of the New Empire, beneath which, it might be hoped, lay the successive coffins, with all their wealth of amulets and ushabtis, which guarded the mummy of the dead king. The canopy itself was of the most extraordinary beauty and splendour. It was of wood heavily gilded, carved with representations of the Buckle of Isis and the Pillar of Osiris, and inlaid with panels of that exquisite blue glazé of which the Egyptians were so justly fond. Its upper edge was formed by the familiar Egyptian gorge-cornice, and its roof was of the usual coved type, common in shrines of all sorts. So completely did it fill the chamber, that there was scarcely room to pass between it and the rock walls, which were rather poorly decorated with painted figures. On the east side of the canopy were bronze-hinged doors, and when these were opened, there appeared within a second canopy, entirely gilt, and closed with doors on which the seals, with their strings, were perfectly intact, a fact of great importance, since it signifies that in all probability the inner shrine remains absolutely as it was left on the day when the Pharaoh was laid to rest amidst all his splendours. Between the two canopies there lay alabaster vessels, amulets, scarabs of rare colour and fine material, and precious stones. Between the outer canopy and the wall of the chamber lay the paddles for the king's barge on the waters of the Underworld.

On the same side of the sarcophagus-chamber

as the doors of the shrine, a large opening in the wall, which had never been closed, led into an annexe. On guard near the entrance of this room was an ebony and gold figure of the god Anubis as a jackal couchant on the top of his shrine. Perhaps the most conspicuous thing in the room was a great gilt coffer, standing over 5 feet high, and adorned along the top with golden uræi, which in all likelihood is the shrine containing the Canopic Jars in which the viscera of the royal mummy were deposited. On its four sides were figures of guardian goddesses, enfolding the shrine with their arms, and wrought with the most wonderful delicacy of modelling and realism of expression. They seemed, said one observer, to be turning reproachful faces towards the intruders who were disturbing the long peace of the tomb. The whole room was crowded with objects of all sorts, coffers and boxes of splendid material and workmanship, model boats for the king's use in the Elysian Fields, ushabti figures in gold and silver, and one exquisite and unique specimen, absolutely complete, of the ostrich-feather fans which are so often depicted on the reliefs of royal processions. The handle of this beautiful piece of craftsmanship was of ivory, delicately carved and adorned with the royal cartouche inlaid in coloured stones.

Such was something of the general impression which was left on the minds of the fortunate few who were privileged to be present at the most marvellous disclosure of the wealth and artistry of ancient Egypt which has ever been given to the world. The impression was of the briefest,

for the explorers had reluctantly to come to the conclusion that it was impossible to carry the work further this season. The heat of the Egyptian spring in the sun-scorched valley was already growing almost unbearable ; the amount of precious material already collected was such as would require months for its proper preservation and arrangement, and it was impossible to add to it a far greater quantity of still more priceless treasure without risking loss and damage. Accordingly, after the tomb had been kept open for a few days longer, it was decided to close it again until the autumn, when the conditions for work would be more favourable. The gang of workmen was set to work again, and by the end of February the tomb of Tutankhamen was once more piled with many hundred tons of rubbish, and the king was left beneath his gorgeous canopy to enjoy for a few months longer the sleep which had been unbroken for 3300 years.

Strangely enough, the incident did not close without an event which seemed to cast a dark shadow across all the splendour of the discovery. Almost immediately after the triumph of the opening, and before the freshness of its interest had faded from men's minds, Lord Carnarvon was stricken down with fever, and in the beginning of April he died in Cairo, leaving his great work still incomplete. There is no need to talk of the flood of superstitious drivel which was let loose over the world by what seemed so tragic an ending to so great a success. It is hard to say whether stupidity or cruelty were more conspicuous in it, and it remains self-condemned

in the eyes of all reasonable people. There is, no doubt, an element of sadness in the thought that he without whom these treasures of the past might never have been disclosed did not live to see the completion of his work; but there is surely also an element of satisfaction in the thought that he knew that his long toil had not been in vain, and that he had accomplished something unique in the story of the exploration of that ancient world to which we owe so much. To leave the scene of triumph while the splendour of accomplishment is still undimmed has ever been esteemed the happiest of destinies. If it be so, then Lord Carnarvon was *felix opportunitate mortis*.

Before we turn to the consideration of some of the chief treasures which have so far been gathered from the outer chambers of the tomb, let us devote a moment to the question of who the Pharaoh is whose splendours have thus dazzled the world, and what is known of his reign and his times. Not the least remarkable feature of the whole find is that the man around whom all this magnificence was gathered is just about one of the last of the Pharaohs whom one would have suspected of creating a sensation in the world of Egyptology. His reign is one of the shortest and least fully recorded in the roll of the XVIIIth Dynasty; indeed the only kings of the Dynasty who seem yet more insignificant than himself are his immediate predecessor Smenkhara, and his immediate successor Ay. The circumstances of his reign, so far as they are known, are briefly these. Tutankhamen began

his career as one of the courtiers of Amenhotep IV (Akhenaten), and one of his supporters in the great revolution which he attempted to carry out on the religion of Egypt ; though, from his apparent youth at the time of his death, he can scarcely have had any real share in the movement. Whether he was of the blood royal or not is uncertain. On the lion from Gebel Barkal, now in the British Museum, he calls Amenhotep III his father. If this means direct relationship, then he must have been the son of Amenhotep III by a secondary wife, and in that case he was a half-brother of Akhenaten, whose son-in-law he afterwards became. On the other hand, the title may be only one of respect applied to an indirect ancestor—really his grandfather-in-law. In any case he must have been of such noble rank, and of a family of such influence, that it was worth Akhenaten's while to secure his adhesion to the new cause, even when he was no more than a boy, by marrying him to one of the young princesses. Accordingly he was married to the third of Akhenaten's daughters, the princess Ankh. s. en. pa. aten, the first daughter, Meryt-aten, being married to another noble of the court, Smenkhara, and the second, Makt-aten, having died probably between her ninth and eleventh year ; and at this time, and till after his accession to the throne, he bears the name Tutankhaten, the name of Amen being of course proscribed by the new faith.

On the death of Akhenaten without male issue, Smenkhara, the husband of the eldest princess, naturally, according to Egyptian custom,

succeeded to the throne, and reigned for a short and uncertain period; then on his death or deposition, the succession fell to Tutankhaten. For a time, apparently, he maintained himself in the new capital of Akhetaten (Tell el-Amarna), but the reaction in favour of the old faith of Amen proved too strong for him, and he was obliged to remove the court to Thebes, and to conform to the worship of Amen. His name was changed to Tutankhamen (Living Image of Amen), and that of his wife to Ankh. s. en. Amen (Her Life is from Amen), and every trace of the religious revolution was obliterated so far as possible. The duration of his reign is uncertain, and probably it cannot have been longer than nine years. It has been suggested, from the evidence of some of the articles in his tomb, that he died before attaining maturity—at all events he must have been still a young man at the time of his death.

As to the events of his reign, we are much in the dark. The brilliance of his funerary equipment has led to the rather hasty conclusion that the reign was marked by a great renaissance of Egyptian art and power, and an attempt to regain the Empire which had been largely lost during the pacifist reign of Akhenaten; but this theory rests on very slight foundations, and, as we shall see, there is another and much more likely explanation of the splendour of the tomb. The only evidences of foreign enterprise during the reign are found in the inscriptions in the tombs of two of the great nobles of the period, Huy and Horemheb, the latter of whom usurped the

throne after the death or deposition of Tutankhamen's successor, Ay. In the tomb of Huy there are records of tribute from Syria and the Soudan, so that it is evident that Egyptian influence was not altogether gone in these two quarters ; and one of the statements in the tomb of Horemheb seems to point to military operations in Syria under Tutankhamen. In this inscription, from a fragment in the Cairo Museum, Horemheb describes himself as " King's follower on his expeditions in the south and north country," and " Companion of the feet of his lord upon the battlefield on that day of slaying the Asiatics."

Beyond this, there is really no evidence as to any events of importance during the reign, whose significance is not in itself, but in the fact that it marks the triumph of the forces of reaction and the reversion to the ancient customs and faith of the land. The early death of Tutankhamen left his wife, Ankh. s. en. Amen, in a very difficult position. She was the only representative in the direct line of the great XVIIIth Dynasty ; but in all probability her own tenure of the throne was very uncertain, and almost impossible.

For a woman to rule the land was a thing not unheard of, for Hatshepsut had ruled with vigour and success ; but it was an unusual thing, though a woman could give to her husband a legitimate title to the royal dignity. Further, there was a point which rendered the reign of Ankh. s. en. Amen virtually an impossibility. She was deeply stained, in the eyes of the dominant priesthood of Amen, by the fact that she was the

daughter of "that criminal of Akhetaten," as her father was now called. Her husband had saved his throne, and probably his life, by his conformity to the old faith, and her conversion had accompanied his; but the daughter of Akhenaten can never have been *persona grata* to the priests of Amen, and when her husband was gone she must have felt that her tenure of the crown, and her very life, hung by a very frail thread. Accordingly she took steps to place herself in a position of greater security. Curiously enough, there has come to light from Boghaz-Kyoi, the Hittite capital, a letter from one of the Hittite kings, probably Mursil II, telling of some of the events of the reign of his father Shubbiluliuma, which gives us our last glimpse of the poor widowed queen struggling in desperation to escape from the net of deadly danger which was drawing closer and closer around her.

"Then their ruler," says the Hittite king, "namely Bib-khuru-riyas [the Hittite version of Neb. kheperu-Ra, the Solar name of Tutankhamen], just at that moment died; now the Queen of Egypt was Dakhamun [the Hittite version of Ankh. s. en. Amen]. She sent an ambassador to my father; she said thus to him: 'My husband is dead; I have no children; your sons are said to be grown up; if to me one of your sons you will give, and if he will be my husband, he will be a help; send him accordingly, and thereafter I will make him my husband. I send bridal gifts.'" The negotiations thus frankly opened by the queen apparently proceeded, not without some hitches, to the point when the bridegroom

24. DECORATION FROM A THEBAN TOMB—SOWING, REAPING, THE VINTAGE.

was selected from among the Hittite princes; for Mursil's statement closes thus: "And then the lady soon fulfilled her words and selected one of the sons." Something, however, must have hindered the completion of the marriage. What it was we may guess, but with no assurance that we are right. The Hittites were old enemies of Egypt, and while Ramses II, a century later, might safely wed a Hittite princess, it was quite another thing for a woman, very insecurely established on the throne, to propose to give Egypt a Hittite king. In itself the plan was likely to be most unpopular with poor Ankh. s. en. Amen's subjects. Even more fatal to it would be the opposition of the priesthood. They, no doubt, had no desire to see the line of their great enemy established on the throne with a new lease of power, and backed by the might of the formidable Hittite Confederacy. It would be an easy thing for them to play on the native prejudice against the attempt to bring in a Hittite consort for their queen. The probability is that the very step which Ankh. s. en. Amen took to secure herself actually hastened, or at least made inevitable, her downfall. At all events the unlucky young widow disappears, with this letter, from the page of history; nor is it difficult to imagine the manner of her disappearance. The journey from the palace to the tomb has never been a long one for an unpopular sovereign in the East, whether in ancient or modern days.

Such, then, is the story of Tutankhamen's reign, so far as we know it. It may be that when all the secrets of his tomb are disclosed we may

learn a little more of the man and his times, though that is rather more than unlikely, for the papyri which may be found in the great shrine of the sarcophagus-chamber will probably be, not historical, but purely religious. Meantime, at all events, we know no more, and the little that is known only seems to underline the contrast between the insignificance of the king and the splendour of the tomb which has dazzled all the world. The pathos of the whole thing can scarcely fail to appeal to the imagination. Here you have a dead monarch laid to rest with such pomp and magnificence that a mere glimpse of the glitter of his equipment has left the world bewildered and gaping; and when you try to conceive the actual facts of the lives behind all this gorgeousness, what you dimly discern, so far as you can see anything, is a poor young couple of children, for Tutankhamen and his wife were scarcely more than that, striving for a little to keep their heads above the dark flood of poisonous priestly hatred and intrigue which surged around them on every side, and sinking one after the other beneath their doom.

> "The glories of our blood and state
> Are shadows, not substantial things."

Obviously the time has not yet come for the discussion of the results of the discovery as these affect our ideas of Egyptian art and craftsmanship. It will be many months, perhaps years, before all the material is before the world in the shape of colour reproductions of the various articles, and until this work is completed comparisons with

already known work cannot be made. Much that has been said with regard to the revolution in our ideas of Egyptian art which is to be brought about by the revelations of Tutankhamen's tomb may have to be qualified or withdrawn in the light of fuller and more leisurely study, and certain things which were for the moment acclaimed as masterpieces will beyond doubt be deposed from an eminence which they would never have attained save under the influence of the enthusiasm of the moment. Still, even when all deductions have been made, there will remain an amount of material of the very highest quality, such as has never before been gathered together for the study of one of the most interesting periods of Egyptian history and art.

Already it is manifest that some of the articles are quite without parallel in any existing collection of Egyptian antiquities. Parallels to most of them, probably to all, doubtless existed, and we can well imagine that even the finest things may have been far surpassed by the magnificence of a really great Pharaoh, such as Amenhotep III ; but these splendours of the culminating period of the Empire no longer exist, or at least have not yet come to light, and we were obliged to form our conception of them from reliefs and paintings, and to fill in the details of their magnificence from our knowledge of the grandeur of the monarch for whose use they were made. Now for the first time we can see the actual creations themselves, and even if they belong, not to one of the greatest of the Pharaohs, but to a comparatively

undistinguished monarch, still they represent the art of a period not far removed from the historic culmination of Egypt's greatness, and it is quite within the bounds of possibility, as we shall see, that some of the most striking of them do indeed belong to the greater age of Tutankhamen's ancestors, rather than to his own.

Of all the articles so far removed from the tomb, the one which has attracted the most attention, and excited the most admiration, has been the Royal Throne, or Chair of State, which was found in the outer chamber. "It is one of the wonders of the world," was the comment of Professor Breasted on his first view of it, and there seems to be little doubt that this enthusiastic praise is well deserved. Within the last quarter of a century, two of the royal thrones of two of the greatest empires of the ancient world have been brought to light, and the simple dignity of the Throne of Minos, discovered by Sir Arthur Evans in the Palace of Knossos, forms a most effective contrast and foil to the gorgeousness of the Throne of Tutankhamen of Thebes, from which it may be separated in date by not much more than a century, the Cretan throne being the earlier, and indeed the earliest royal throne known to exist.

The Throne of Tutankhamen is of wood, covered with a thin plating of gold and adorned with finely carved lions' heads. The arms of the chair are of modelled wood also overlaid with gold, and beneath them, on either side, is a sacred uræus, partly wrought in glaze, with the

crown of Egypt in silver. On the back of the throne is a panel of beautiful workmanship, on which the king is represented seated, with his legs crossed, and giving his hand to the Queen, who is standing—a motive which in its unconventionality speaks distinctly of the realistic art of Tell el-Amarna, and suggests comparisons with the famous Berlin relief in which Akhenaten leans on his staff, while his Queen Nefertiti holds out a lotus bloom for him to sniff. The exposed flesh of the faces and other parts of the body is beautifully modelled in semi-opaque reddish glaze, while the King's costume is rendered in painting overlaid with crystal. The queen's dress is wrought in silver, and beside her, on a table, there stands a charming bouquet formed of semi-precious stones inlaid. The seat of the throne is patterned with blue, white, and gold mosaic squares, set in diagonal lines. The whole effect is gorgeous in the extreme, and the description of the workmanship takes one's mind back at once to the King's Gaming Board of the Palace of Knossos, with its blaze of blue and gold and crystal on ivory. Whether we are to infer Cretan influence in the Egyptian splendour, or whether Crete derived from earlier Egyptian work, is a question which may prove of interest in the future. At any rate, we know that the two great cultures were for many centuries in the closest touch, and that each borrowed from the other, adapting the foreign ideas to its own tastes.

One of the features of the throne is highly suggestive of the conditions of Tutankhamen's

reign. On the gold plating of the chair, the royal cartouche has been altered, and shows the name which the king adopted after his conversion to orthodoxy. At the side of the arms, however, the cartouche, wrought in inlay of semi-precious stones and glass, remains unaltered, and still shows the old heretical form Tutankhaten. The manifest reason for the difference is that while it was comparatively easy to alter a cartouche wrought in gold plate, it was very much the opposite with one wrought in inlay. Tutankhamen, spite of his royal dignity, had, like Mrs. Gilpin, a frugal mind, and could see no sense in discarding his old Tell el-Amarna throne, even though it could not be perfectly adapted to his change of circumstances and of faith.

So the throne survives to tell us, not only of the wonderful artistic skill of the Egyptian craftsman of 3300 years ago, but also of the difficulties and inconsistencies of such a period of transition as that in which Tutankhamen's lot was cast. On the stele which he set up at Karnak, and which is now in the Cairo Museum, the king has described the miserable state of the kingdom on his accession. "When His Majesty became King of the South, the whole country was in a state of chaos, similar to that in which it had been in primeval times. From Elephantine to the Swamps of the Delta the properties of the temples of the gods and goddesses had been destroyed, their shrines were in a state of ruin, and their estates had become a desert. Weeds grew in the courts of the temples." He tells

us of the wonders of restoration which he accomplished when " Egypt and the Red Land came under his supervision, and every land greeted his will with bowings of submission."

But Horemheb's Coronation Inscription suggests a somewhat different state of affairs from the picture of restored prosperity which Tutankhamen presents, and the hatred with which the later monarch pursued the memory of his predecessor hints that the reign of the half-heretic king was but reluctantly accepted, as a stage on the way to the full restoration of the ancient state of affairs—a stage whose fitting emblem is the throne with its symbols of the old faith and the new intermingled.

One of the most interesting among the finds of the outer chamber is that of the boxes containing royal robes, both of the King and the Queen. Whether it may be found possible to preserve permanently these exquisitely dainty fabrics remains to be seen ; meanwhile it may be said that what has been seen of them enhances our respect for the skill of the weavers of the XVIIIth Dynasty who wrought such superlatively fine stuffs. Incidentally, the Queen's robes give us a curious link with the Egypt of a day far earlier than even that of Tutankhamen.

In the Westcar Papyrus we are told how King Seneferu, the last king of the IIIrd Dynasty, about seventeen hundred years before the time of Tutankhamen, feeling bored one day, called to him the wizard Zazamankh, and demanded a cure for his ennui, and how the wizard prescribed a sail in the royal barge manned by twenty of the

most beautiful maidens of the royal harem. "Bring me twenty oars of ebony inlaid with gold, with blades of light wood, inlaid with electrum; and bring me twenty maidens, fair in their limbs, their bosoms and their hair, all virgins; and bring me twenty fishing-nets, and give these nets unto the maidens for their garments." Now the Queen's robes, found in the tomb, "are made of the daintiest diaphanous bead net material." Evidently the taste which inspired the novel prescription of the IIIrd Dynasty wizard persisted in the Egyptian Court. We should have inferred as much from the reliefs and paintings which have come down to us, but the robes from the Tutankhamen tomb are the solitary specimens of the royal dress of ancient Egypt which have survived to the present day.

Along with these robes may be grouped the so-called coat of mail, which is one of the wonders of the ceremonial art of the time. The general type of this wonderful garment is familiar from Wilkinson's representation of the corselet pictured in the tomb of Ramses III, with its overlapping scales of metal. In the case of Tutankhamen's corselet, however, the scales, instead of being of bronze on leather, are pear-shaped links of faience laid on gold and backed with linen, which, of course, has almost entirely perished, rendering the reconstitution of the coat a matter of great difficulty. The collar shows a rich pattern of concentric rings and rectangular plaques of faience in deep turquoise blue, and red and yellow. Below the collar, and wrought into the breast of this superb piece of mail, is a

25. HEAD OF THE HATHOR-COW, DER EL-BAHRI.

brilliant design stretching right across the chest, representing the hawk-headed Horus introducing Tutankhamen to Amen. Should it be possible to complete the restoration of this beautiful piece of design, we shall be in possession of a unique specimen of the Egyptian armourer's art, though, of course, it is such a piece of armour as was never destined to be worn on active service, but only on ceremonial occasions. Indeed, it is probable that the ceremonial occasion for which it was designed was that of the King's funeral; for we know from the Rainer Papyrus that such corselets formed, at least in later days, an essential portion of the royal funerary furnishing—so much so that the funeral could not be completed without them.

Between six and seven hundred years after the time of Tutankhamen, the funeral of Eiorhoreru, prince of Heliopolis, could not be completed because Ka. amenhotep, prince of Mendes, had stolen his funerary breastplate. Pimay, the son of the dead prince, has to win the corselet back in a tournament before he can get his father buried with the proper ceremonies. A matter of seven hundred years is nothing in the life of an Egyptian custom; and there can be little doubt that the corselet of Tutankhamen is just such a ceremonial breastplate as that for whose possession Pimay and his allies fought in tourney against Ka. amenhotep and his friends, with Pedubast of Tanis, overlord of the Delta, as judge of the passage of arms.

Among the other articles of royal wearing apparel were the magnificent sandals with their

decoration of golden ducks' heads and gold roundels. The leather of the sandals had almost entirely perished with the lapse of time, being turned into a substance more like glue; but it retained sufficient tenacity to hold the decorative work together, and to let us see how magnificently a Pharaoh of the Empire was shod and how gorgeous were the feet before which the vassal kings of Syria and the Soudan bowed down, "seven times and seven times." Interesting too, in their own way, were the child's linen glove, and the child's tippet, of linen with sequin decoration. Speculation has framed, on the basis of the small size of these and other articles, the theory that the king died in early youth, in fact when he had scarcely emerged from childhood. We know nothing, however, of the reason for the presence of these articles in the tomb; and the foundation for such speculations is far too slight to bear the weight of inference which it is sought to rear upon it. From other and more satisfactory reasons it has been inferred that Tutankhamen died in early maturity; but that is a different matter.

Nothing is more fitted to reconcile us to the destiny which has decreed that we should live in the drab and unpicturesque twentieth century than the contemplation of the inconveniences with which the kings and great folk of the bygone ages had to put up in the midst of the glittering splendours which dazzle our imagination. One of these is hinted at by the presence in the tomb of the candlesticks which bore the light of Tutankhamen's days. They are small bronze

articles, shaped in the form of the Ankh, and carrying fastened to them linen wicks, which were, no doubt, soaked in oil. As small pieces of decorative workmanship, they are pretty enough ; but it is impossible to imagine anything much less satisfactory in the way of lighting than they would seem to be. No doubt there were other and bigger candlesticks than these, and we cannot imagine that a luxurious court like that of Thebes would not have something corresponding to the great stone standard lamps which flared and sputtered in the halls and corridors of the contemporary palace of Minos at Knossos ; but even so, the lighting of an Egyptian palace must have been what we should think miserably inefficient, and Pharaoh must have been sorely put to it to find occupation for his evenings, when all the glitter of his gorgeousness grew dim and shabby in the light of the miserable smoking and flickering lamps which at best can have done little more than to make darkness visible.

A prominent feature among the heaps of wonderful things in the tomb was the group of elaborately carved alabaster vases which has been so often figured and so much be-praised since the discovery was made. Of the interest attaching to these extraordinary vases there can be no question ; but when we are told that they are " the most beautiful alabaster vases in the world," it is time to enter a protest. They are nothing of the sort.

As specimens of workmanship they are wonderful enough ; as specimens of art they are flagrantly bad,—characteristic types of an art

which has passed its maturity and is on the downgrade. The over-elaboration and the far too complicated character of their decoration are sufficient to condemn them, and they are not to be compared for one moment, from the point of artistic value, with the simple and graceful forms of earlier work. Indeed, even in Tutankhamen's tomb, and in the same chamber with these over-praised and overdone pieces of pretentiousness, there were vases far more worthy of praise for their artistic quality than the ones whose noisy ornamentation has singled them out for a notice which they do not deserve.

Of all the objects so far removed from the tomb, none has attracted more attention, and none seems likely to create more controversy, than the group of extraordinary gilt state couches, the Lion, Hathor, and Typhon couches, as they came to be called. The thing which drew attention to them was not their beauty, for anything more hideous it is impossible to imagine ; it was their strangeness. With Egyptian couches and biers the world was pretty familiar before ; but these were widely different, with their quiet and shapely lines, from the barbaric monstrosities of Tutankhamen's tomb. The heads of the couches present, indeed, some resemblances to familiar Egyptian types ; but even so, the suggestion which rises to the mind on viewing them is that these are Egyptian types interpreted by an alien temperament and executed by alien craftsmen. It seems almost impossible to believe that an Egyptian craftsman, with his tradition of taste and restraint, would ever have produced

such abortions, calculated to produce nightmares instead of slumber in those who tried to rest upon them.

Accordingly Professor Petrie has asserted that these couches are not of Egyptian workmanship at all. No Egyptian workman, he says, ever produced work assembled with bronze joints as these couches are ; they must have been produced in a distant country, and jointed in this fashion for convenience of transport, being reassembled on their arrival. Further, the decoration (trefoil) on one of them is characteristically Babylonian. Therefore it seems probable that we must look to Babylon for their origin ; and Professor Petrie suggests that these are the identical couches to which the Babylonian king Kadashman-Enlil refers in one of the Tell el-Amarna letters, where he says, writing to Amenhotep III, that he is sending to the Egyptian king " a couch of *ushu* wood, ivory and gold, three couches and six thrones of *ushu* and gold," and other furniture.

There is nothing unlikely in the idea that couches of such international importance, coming from one great monarch to another, should have been preserved for the matter of forty years or so, and buried as heirlooms in the tomb of the last of the line ; and the suggestion lends an added interest to the ugly things. Sir E. A. W. Budge, however, rejects the idea, and asserts that the beast represented on the most hideous of the couches is simply the composite monster Ammit, " the Eater of the Dead," so often represented in the Judgment Scene in the vignettes of the *Book of the Dead*. " The

Mesopotamians knew of no such beast, and the couch or bier could only have been made in Egypt, where the existence of Ammit was believed in and the fear of her was great." In support of his opinion he quotes from the Papyrus of Hunefer—" Her forepart is crocodile," and anyone familiar with the Judgment Scene will remember that this certainly is so. The trouble is that whatever the hideous monster of Tutankhamen's tomb may represent, " her forepart " certainly is *not* crocodile. It is ugly and sinister enough for anything; but no Egyptian craftsman would have dreamed of trying to pass this clumsy monster off as a representation of a crocodile—one of the most familiar of objects.

Especially in view of the methods of construction involved—a point on which no man is better qualified than Petrie to pronounce an opinion—Budge seems to have done nothing to invalidate the Babylonian suggestion, which, for the rest, takes its place very naturally, as we shall see, in the explanation of the extraordinary wealth of furniture found in the tomb of one of the least famous Pharaohs of the XVIIIth Dynasty. The couches seem, to an unprejudiced mind, just such work as would be produced by a clever workman working on motives which were quite foreign to his usual practice, and therefore producing results which, while they have a distinct resemblance to the types which he was imitating, yet show these as seen and interpreted by an outsider, and not by one to whom they were parts of his normal training.

Of the statues found in the tomb, two, the life-sized ones of bituminised wood adorned with gold, were fine specimens of the normal type of tomb portrait; the third, the so-called "Mannikin," was of a different class. It was only a half-length, and lacked the arms; but in other respects it was a careful and artistic piece of work and obviously a faithfully studied portrait. The idea that its imperfect condition is due to the fact that it was a sort of glorified tailor's dummy, on which the royal robes were fitted before being worn by the Pharaoh, may probably be dismissed without ceremony. It is not obvious why, in a period when court dress was of the most elaborate type, with long robes of fine linen falling to the feet, and wide sleeves coming almost to the elbow, the mannikin should have neither legs nor arms, which one would have judged essential for the purpose of trying the fall of the robe. Another view was that it was a portrait, not of Tutankhamen, but of his wife, Ankh. s. en. Amen. There can be no doubt about the quality of the portrait, though to talk of "the strange pensive smile playing about the lips, recalling the baffling smile of Da Vinci's Mona Lisa," is to invite comparisons which are scarcely fair to the older work of art; but it certainly is not the portrait of a woman. It may be a head-portrait of the type not uncommon in Old Kingdom tombs; or it may be part of the foundation of a copper statue, like that of Pepy of the Old Kingdom, though in that case it is difficult to see why it should have been so carefully coloured.

In the meantime it is impossible to say much about the treasures of the sarcophagus-chamber and its annexe. Scarcely more than a glimpse has been vouchsafed of these, no more than enough to whet curiosity and expectation. But there can be little doubt that the splendour of the two inner chambers will be in accordance with the preface to it which the outer chambers have yielded. No one can doubt the magnificence of the great canopy, which in itself would be a treasure beyond price; and all observers are at one as to the marvellous beauty of the shrine with the four goddesses. The motive of its decoration is, of course, one perfectly familiar in Egyptian art, and is found in all ages. The beautiful pink granite sarcophagus of Tutankhamen's successor and enemy Horemheb, for instance, has as part of its adornment another version of the same idea of the protecting goddess. But the detail of the Canopic Shrine, if it prove to be such, appears to be of a quality and inspiration rare even in the finest Egyptian work. For the rest, we can only wait and hope.

A good deal has been said about the need of recasting our ideas of Egyptian history in the light of the new information which has been gained from the tomb of Tutankhamen, and some writers have hinted that our whole conception of the close of the XVIIIth Dynasty is wrong, and must be recast to square with the new facts. We are asked to discard the idea of an Egypt beginning to decline from the lofty position which she had held under Thothmes III and Amenhotep III, and to substitute for this the picture

26. COLOSSUS OF RAMSES II, LUXOR.

of an Egypt waking with renewed strength from the uneasy religious dreams of the reign of Akhenaten, and asserting once more, and with greater vigour than ever, her dominion in the realms of both politics and art.

All this is merely a vain imagination. Historically, no new facts have emerged from the tomb of Tutankhamen. It is scarcely true to say, with Budge, that " we know no more now about the reign of this king than we did before Lord Carnarvon made his phenomenal discovery." That would only be the case on the narrow reading of the meaning of history which would confine it to the mere recording of dates, conquests, and legislation. The art of any period constitutes no small part of its history, and for the history of far-past times it is one of our most valuable sources of information ; and we may surely look for a large extension of our knowledge of the art of ancient Egypt in the reign of Tutankhamen from the treasures of his tomb.

But so far as concerns the facts of what the king, and Egypt under his leadership, accomplished in the matter of raising again the declining prestige and power of the Empire, we know no more than we did before the tomb was opened ; nor is it likely that when the work is completed we shall have gained much more information, if any, on this point. For the likelihood is that if there are any papyri beneath the great golden canopy, they will be of a purely religious type, versions of one or other of the different forms of spiritual guide-book which the devout Egyptian

carried with him on his long journey through the dark Underworld.

The artistic value of the find is another matter. There can be no question but that this splendid collection of the finest work of the craftsmen of the XVIIIth Dynasty, by far the greatest assemblage of such work known to exist, will prove of the utmost importance in shaping and correcting our ideas of Egyptian art at one of the most interesting points of its long development. Never before has such a mass of material of the highest class been available for study. Yet even here it would be rash to assume that the result will be any considerable modification of our views as to the period of culmination of the art of the New Empire. At the most, and assuming that all the art of the tomb is strictly of the time of the king with whose burial it is associated, and that its quality is all of the supreme standard which has been attributed to it, the net result would be the shifting of the apex of the curve a matter of thirty or thirty-five years, a small thing when we are dealing with an art whose history is written in millenniums. But it seems likely that even this is more than we need necessarily assume.

There is always the possibility that in the tomb of Tutankhamen we are dealing, not only with the splendours of one king, but perhaps also with many of the heirlooms of the royal house to which he belonged, in which case we should be faced with specimens of the art, not of one period of a few years' duration, but with those of perhaps a whole century, perhaps of a

longer period still. The work of sifting out the various sources and periods of the materials found in the tomb will prove a most fascinating, if also a most difficult, task ; when it is accomplished—the work of years—we may be in a position to speak more definitely about the change or the confirmation which the tomb of Tutankhamen has brought to our previous theories of the growth and decline of Egyptian art ; meanwhile we must wait, with the assurance that even in the extremest case, the discovery can scarcely commit us to anything revolutionary of our previous conceptions.

The mention of the possibility of some of the articles found in the tomb being family heirlooms of the XVIIIth Dynasty brings up the last question with which it is necessary to deal in this short survey. How does it come about that a Pharaoh of no great standing in the long line of Egyptian monarchs—a mere stopgap king, a pigmy between giants—was buried with surroundings whose splendour exceeds anything known in all the story of royal magnificence ? The discoveries of Tutankhamen's wonderful funerary equipment make us wonder what we may have lost in the fact that his is the only royal tomb which has been found practically unrifled. Had we found, for instance, the tomb of a really great Pharaoh, such as Amenhotep III, as intact as that of his descendant, we should have been in a better position to form a judgment on the matter ; but that unfortunately has been denied us. One suggestion may be made, with the proviso that it is no more than a suggestion,

which may be confirmed or disproved by subsequent investigation. It has already been suggested that some of the most curious, if not the most beautiful, of the finds are relics, not of the time of Tutankhamen, but of Amenhotep III, dating therefore from forty years before the time when they were stored away in the Valley of the Kings ; and it has also been suggested that another very interesting article, the footstool with figures of Asiatic captives inlaid upon it, dates from an even earlier period, that of Amenhotep II, and is therefore a century older than the time to which the burial belongs.

Tutankhamen, we know, was the last king of the direct line of the XVIIIth Dynasty. His widow, Ankh. s. en. Amen, was left in a most insecure position from which she made, as we know, a desperate and unavailing effort to extricate herself. May it not be that, with the consciousness that all the glories of her house were in danger of passing to mere usurpers of undistinguished origin, such as the obscure priest Ay, who succeeded Tutankhamen, or the commonplace soldier Horemheb, who drove Ay from the throne, she secured at least some of the most treasured heirlooms of the royal house from desecration by hiding them in the tomb of her dead husband ?

It is, of course, only an idea, which must stand or fall by the results of future study ; but it seems, at least in the meantime, to offer a reasonable explanation of a point on which no other explanation is for the present forthcoming.

CHAPTER VIII

LIFE, ARTS, AND CRAFTS IN THE LAND OF THE NILE

PRACTICALLY the whole of our knowledge of the conditions under which life was lived in Egypt, of the organisation of society, of the arts and crafts by which the needs and tastes of the people were met, is due to the results of excavation during the last century. We owe, of course, a great deal to the statements of Herodotus and Diodorus as to the conditions which they found existing in their time; but the great source of information must always be the mass of first-hand material which has been gathered, mainly from the tombs with their wealth of funerary furnishings, by the work of the excavator. Therefore it would seem that the fitting conclusion to our brief survey of the various aspects of excavation should be a sketch of the life of ancient Egypt, with the arts and crafts which ministered to its necessities and its luxuries. Such a sketch must, of course, be of the slightest and least elaborated type, for the amount of material is so enormous that only the most salient points can be touched; but it may still be true so far as it goes, and may perhaps

serve as an outline within which further details may be inserted by the student of ancient Egyptian life.

First of all, we may take the framework of society. Through the whole of Egyptian history the outline of this is very much the same, though there are many variations in the relative importance of the various parts. The head of the state is always the Pharaoh, placed on a level immensely above even the most powerful of his subjects, but, as we shall see, by no means an irresponsible tyrant, but rather a limited monarch, governing in accordance with strictly defined customs.

Beneath him are the great nobles and the great official class—two sections of society which were not in ancient Egypt, as in so many other ancient realms, virtually different names for the same thing.

Then came the priestly class, at all times one of the most important in the land, and tending at certain periods, with the weakening of the royal power, to overshadow all the other interests.

It appears that there was a definitely military class, with definite lands assigned to it for its support, though in the earlier days of the kingdom the wars were not the business of a separate class of professional soldiers, but were carried on by a general levy of the people. The other great land-holding class of the nation was that of the husbandmen, who apparently were much of our own old yeoman type, holding their land by the payment of taxes.

Behind these classes, which, so to speak,

formed the backbone of the nation, came the shepherds, hunters, artificers, traders, and workers at other subsidiary occupations. These held no land, and their occupations appear to have been mainly hereditary, no artisan being allowed to pass from one trade to another, or to have his children reckoned in any other class than his own. The various trades must have been organised more or less after the plan of the mediæval trade-guilds, though in the case of Egypt the organisation was apparently a national, and not a local affair. Beneath the tradesmen came the slave class, whose number varied pretty much according to the wars on which the nation was engaged, and their fruitfulness, or the opposite, in yielding captives.

Slave labour was never a prominent feature of Egyptian life, and Petrie estimates the slave population of the land at its maximum at no more than a quarter of a million out of a possible population of twelve millions.

To the imagination of most folk probably the mention of "Pharaoh, King of Egypt," suggests a typical Oriental tyrant, responsible to nothing but his own passions, and governing according to the whim of the moment. Such a picture may have been true of an Assyrian or Babylonian king, like Ashurbanipal or Nebuchadnezzar, and perhaps the frequency of assassination in the records of the Assyrian kings hints that it was; but it certainly was not true of ancient Egypt. Pharaoh's own grandiose inscriptions, and the fiction which regarded him as a god incarnate, may suggest unbridled power; but as

a matter of fact, Pharaoh was anything but the rampant and romantic despot whom we imagine distributing life and death at his own capricious will, but rather a somewhat humdrum constitutional monarch, whose every action was regulated for him centuries before he was born, by an unchanging custom, and who could no more step beyond the limits which immemorial laws had assigned to him than he could jump out of his skin, or off his own shadow.

The thing which amazed the Greeks, with their experience of irresponsible tyrants, was the fact that so great a king as Pharaoh was not the master, but the servant of the laws. "He could not do any public business, condemn or punish any man to gratify his own humour or revenge, or for any other unjust cause; but was bound to do according as the laws had ordered in every particular case. . . . The kings, therefore, carrying this even hand towards all their subjects, were more beloved by them than by their own kindred."

Petrie has suggested that it is this limitation of the power of the Pharaoh which is accountable for the unusual stability of the Egyptian throne. "The absence of republican interludes, so frequent in other parts of the Mediterranean, was apparently due to the monarchy being strictly limited by law. However bad an Egyptian might be personally, he could not earn the hatred of his subjects like the irresponsible Greek tyrants or Roman emperors."

Indeed Pharaoh according to fact is a very different figure from Pharaoh according to

27. PORTRAIT-STATUE OF MENTUEMHAT, CAIRO MUSEUM.

imagination. We must try to substitute for the gorgeous tiger of our fancies the figure, gorgeous enough indeed, so far as concerns his apparel, of a laborious servant of the State whose life, instead of being spent in wild orgies of licence and wild explosions of ferocity, was mainly occupied, from the time when he rose in the morning to the time when he crawled to bed at night, in a manner quite familiar to royalty in our own country, in signing dull reports, and reading dull dispatches, presiding over long and wearisome temple services, and travelling about the country to see that everything was working smoothly.

The new picture is by no means so picturesque as the old one ; but it is the real Pharaoh, and no doubt it was for the good, both of his subjects and himself, that " Pharaoh had to act every hour according to fixed routine, without room for the licence of a Dionysius or a Caligula." The brilliant tiger looks romantic in a story, but when his despotism becomes unbearable it has generally to be tempered by assassination, as with Sargon, Sennacherib, and many another ; but as a matter of fact the Egyptian Pharaoh generally managed to die quietly in his own bed when his time came.

Not that he had not his own power, and his own initiative. His headship of the State involved headship of the army in war, and this was no polite fiction, where Pharaoh reaped the glory while his soldiers had the danger. Seqenen-Ra's mummy, with its ghastly wounds on head and face, tells us how real was the duty

of Egyptian royalty in the day of battle. Thothmes III led the van of his army through the defile of Aaruna, when his chosen captains shirked the task, and though we need not believe all that Ramses II tells us about his share in the battle of Kadesh, there is no doubt that he fought hand to hand with the Hittites in the forefront of the battle, and at least proved himself a good trooper, whatever may be thought of his generalship. Much power also lay in his hands in respect of the selection and advancement of able men from the lower to the higher ranks of the public service, and of rewarding their work with grants of land, of initiating the great public works which were often of such untold benefit to the land, and of conducting the Foreign-Office business of the country, and the negotiation of treaties. In short, Pharaoh had no lack of work to do, and was probably like his modern successors in Kingship, one of the hardest-worked men in the land; but from start to finish, the Egyptian monarchy was a limited one.

Two instances of the limitation of the royal power, and its strict subjection to law, may be given. When Queen Amtes was tried, in the reign of Pepy I of the VIth Dynasty, for some unspecified offence, the trial was conducted without even the presence of the king. "His Majesty," says Una in his famous inscription, "caused me to enter in order to hear the case alone. No chief judge and vizier at all, no prince at all was there, but only I alone, because I was excellent, because I was pleasant to the heart

of His Majesty." Again, in the time of King Ramses III of the XXth Dynasty, there was a great palace conspiracy arising out of an intrigue in the harem to dethrone Ramses, and put the son of one of the harem ladies on the throne. In most other Oriental palaces the discovery of such a thing would have been the signal for a general massacre. Instead of executing summary justice, Ramses appointed a commission, giving them these remarkable instructions: "What the people have spoken, I do not know. Hasten to investigate it. You will go and question them, and those who must die, you will cause to die by their own hand, without my knowing anything of it. You will also cause the punishment awarded to the others to be carried out without my knowing anything of it."

Pharaoh may not always have been a model of propriety or of rectitude; but he was far too strictly hedged about by precedent to allow of the brutal tyranny and licence which have so often marked other Eastern monarchies, and, besides, one fails to see how, with his time so completely filled as we know it to have been, with all sorts of necessary routine, he can have had much opportunity for mischief, even if he had the desire.

The king's chief functionary and right-hand man was the Vizier, who must have been just about as hard-worked a man as his master. The inscription in the tomb of Rekhmara, who was vizier under Thothmes III, enumerates thirty separate functions which had to be discharged by the fortunate holder of this great office. "The

vizier is Grand Steward of all Egypt, and all the activities of the State are under his control. He has general oversight of the treasury, and the chief treasurer reports to him ; he is chief justice, or head of the judiciary ; he is chief of police, both for the residence-city and the kingdom ; he is minister of war, both for army and navy ; he is secretary of the interior and of agriculture, while all general executive functions of State, with many that may not be classified, are incumbent upon him. There is indeed no prime function of the State which does not operate through his office. He is a veritable Joseph, and it must be this office which the Hebrew writer has in mind in the story of Joseph." Altogether we may conclude that, whatever the salary of the vizier may have been, he probably earned it.

A quaint picture of the way in which a high Egyptian official was hedged about with routine is given by Rekhmara in his description of the procedure of the court of justice. " As for every act of this official, the vizier while hearing in the hall of the vizier, he shall sit upon a chair, with a rug upon the floor, and a dais upon it, a cushion under his back, a cushion under his feet, and a baton at his hand ; the forty skins [parchments of the codified law] shall be open before him. Then the magnates of the South shall stand in the two aisles before him, while the master of the privy chamber is on his right, the receiver of income on his left, the scribes of the vizier at his either hand ; one corresponding to another, with each man at his proper place.

One shall be heard after another, without allowing one who is behind to be heard before one who is in front."

The great offices of State, of course, often fell to men of high rank, and of hereditary influence. Rekhmara himself came of noble family, and succeeded his uncle in the vizierate. But this was by no means necessarily the case. Egypt always presented the career open to talent which Napoleon desired. "All through the history there was a free rising of ability from the lower levels, as we see in England—Wolsey, the butcher's son, and many others. . . . This was a chief cause of the durability of Egyptian society; great as the differences were, there was a gradation interlocking all through, as in England."

A notable instance of the rise of a talented man is given by the tomb-inscription of that same Una whom we have already seen presiding over the trial of Queen Amtes. Beginning his official career as an "inferior custodian of the domain of Pharaoh," Una during three reigns steadily climbed up the official ladder, until at last he became governor of the South under Merenra, and was the favoured official chosen to fetch the granite for the royal sarcophagus and pyramid from the quarries at Aswan. Senmut again, the famous architect and minister of Queen Hatshepsut, tells us in the inscription on his statue at Karnak that he was "the greatest of the great in the whole land," and seems to have held power not inferior to that of the vizier, though there is no evidence that he held that office; yet he tells us in his Berlin inscription

that " his ancestors were not found in writing," or in other words, that he was a self-made man.

The elaborately organised court held many offices both ornamental and useful, which gave openings for talent or ambition. Perhaps one of the most influential positions was one which involved no very important duties, but brought the holder of it into close and constant touch with Pharaoh. This was the position of the " fan-bearer at the king's right hand." His function was purely ornamental, and he can be seen in paintings and reliefs carrying a tiny fan beside the king's litter as the symbol of his office, while the real work of fanning is done by the ordinary fan-bearers with their big business-like fans ; but he was the highest court-official, a sort of Lord Chamberlain, with powers of giving or denying entry to the presence, and no doubt his favour was all-important to a petitioner, as that of one who had the ear of Pharaoh. As to the rest of the court, there was a multitude of officials quite comparable to the tail of useless boot-lickers who adorned the court of Louis XIV ; but one imagines that, in earlier days at least, the courtier of Pharaoh had to do more for his position than the hanger-on of the Grand Monarque.

The priesthood formed a very large and very influential class. In theory, the King was always the Supreme Priest, the Pontifex Maximus of the kingdom, and very often several of the high-priesthoods of the different gods were held by members of the royal family, thus securing that the Pharaoh should be represented in the priestly

councils whose loyalty or disloyalty might mean so much to the stability of his throne. Thus in the reign of Ramses II, his favourite son Khaemuast, the Wizard-Prince of the Setna papyrus, was high-priest of Ptah at Memphis. No doubt the fact that there was such a multitude of gods, whose priesthoods were all jealous of one another, was some security against the overwhelming influence of the priestly caste, especially in the earlier days; but the fate of Akhenaten's movement showed that in spite of local jealousies the priestly caste was really one in face of any attempt to diminish its power and privileges; and in the end the unquestioned supremacy of Amen led to the Amen priesthood gaining a position and influence which was superior to that of the weak Ramesside Pharaohs, and which resulted in the supersession of the true royal line, and the substitution for it of the XXIst Dynasty of priest-kings. Even before things had reached such a pitch, the immense wealth which the piety of successive kings had accumulated in the coffers of the priesthoods, and especially of that of Amen, must have constituted a real danger to the state, while the amount of land held by the priests, and so exempt from taxation, went with the other accumulation to constitute a steady drain on the national resources which in the end they were not able to bear.

The class of the great nobles was held in strict subordination to the royal power in the days of the strong early monarchs of the Old Kingdom; but, with the weakening of the royal

authority which followed the Vth Dynasty, the honours and powers which Pharaoh had heaped on his faithful courtiers, and which had been a convenient relief to the central authority as shifting part of the burden of local administration to the shoulders of the local great men, proved a danger to the State. A kind of feudal system grew up in which the local chieftains assumed the powers and as much as they could afford of the splendours of Pharaoh himself, claiming to hold their offices by hereditary right, maintaining their own armies, holding their own courts of justice, and even daring to place after their own names in their proclamations the formula, "Living for ever and ever," which had hitherto been the sacred attribute of the crown alone.

The revival of the monarchy, first under the Antefs and Mentuhoteps of the XIth Dynasty, and then under the Senuserts and Amenemhats of the XIIth Dynasty, however, soon curbed the pretensions of these petty princelets, and the changes of the Hyksos invasion and the War of Independence wiped out the last relics of the Egyptian feudal system, which never revived under the New Empire. Even under strong kings like the Pharaohs of the Middle Kingdom, the courts of the local nomarchs were no small things, as they might employ anything from fifty to a hundred officials, from the steward down to the "mat-spreader."

Tomb-inscriptions are not perhaps the most trustworthy sources as to the personal character of a class of men, nor are we to expect that Ameny or Khnemhotep will tell us anything of the shady

28. Vth DYNASTY RELIEF-WORK, TOMB OF PTAH-HETEP.

side of their administration. Yet it must be confessed that Ameny's story of his administration of the Oryx Nome gives a pleasant picture of the relations of a great local noble and official to the people of his province; and we may say that if Egypt in the time of the Middle Kingdom had many nomarchs of his stamp, she was a fortunate land.

"There was no citizen's daughter whom I misused," says the great man, "there was no widow whom I oppressed, there was no peasant whom I repulsed, there was no shepherd whom I repelled, there was not a foreman of five from whom I took his men for forced work. There was not a pauper around me; there was not a hungry man of my time. When there came years of famine, I arose, I ploughed all the fields of the Oryx Nome to its southern and its northern boundary, I kept its inhabitants alive, making provision so that there was not a hungry man in it. I gave to the widow as to her that possessed a husband; nor did I exalt the great above the small in all that I gave. Thereafter great rises of the Nile took place, producing wheat and barley and all things; but I did not exact the arrears of the farm." "I gave bread to the hungry," says another noble, "and clothes to the naked, and gave a passage in my own boat to those who could not cross. I was a father to the orphan, a husband to the widow, a protection from the wind to the shivering; I am one who spake what was good, and related what was good. I acquired my possessions in a just manner."

All this may savour a little of Pharisaic

self-righteousness to us; but at least it shows that there was a recognised idea, among the governing class, of the duties which a great man owed to those under him, and the possession of such an ideal must have made bad government more difficult.

The same praise can scarcely be given to the ideals of the other important, though minor, official class, the scribes. The Egyptian scribe belonged to a type with which we are perfectly familiar still, the type of the petty official who thinks that there is nothing in all the world so fine as petty officialdom, unless it be superior officialdom, and who looks down on all other professions with a scorn which is only equalled by his ignorance. In a land where writing was so complicated a matter, and where it so early assumed supreme importance, where also the annual inundation with its obliterating of land-marks made the possession of written records a matter of great importance, the scribe obviously had a splendid field for his work, and for the development of all his peculiar vices. It was possible for a careful scribe to climb from the humblest position to one of great dignity and power, and the Egyptian scribe never forgot that every scribe carried in his writing-case the wand of office of a potential vizier.

The scribes have left us many examples of what they thought of themselves and of all other people and professions, and it may be safely said that of no other class of Egyptian do we carry away so unpleasant an impression as of that one which no doubt imagined that it was

impressing its own immense superiority on the minds of all posterity. The Egyptian cherished a profound admiration for learning; but his devotion to letters was not because of the beauty of learning in itself, but simply because it was the avenue to preferment and the way of escape from the miseries of toil or the dangers of war. Both the admiration and the mercenary reason for it are expressed in the words of an ancient sage recorded for us in the Sallier Papyrus:

> "Give thy heart to learning and love her like a mother,
> For there is nothing that is so precious as learning . . .
> Behold there is no profession which is not governed,
> It is only the learned man who rules himself."

The scribe saw himself, because of his possession of letters, immeasurably above all the poor creatures who had to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow. He was exempt from all the pains and anxieties of the workman, and loved maliciously to contemplate them while he issued the orders which imposed further burdens on backs already heavily burdened. "The poor ignorant man, 'whose name is unknown, is like a heavily-laden donkey, he is driven by the scribe,' while the fortunate man 'who has set his heart upon learning' is above work, and becomes a wise prince." "The learned man has enough to eat because of his learning." Therefore, "set to work and become a scribe, for then thou shalt become a leader of men."

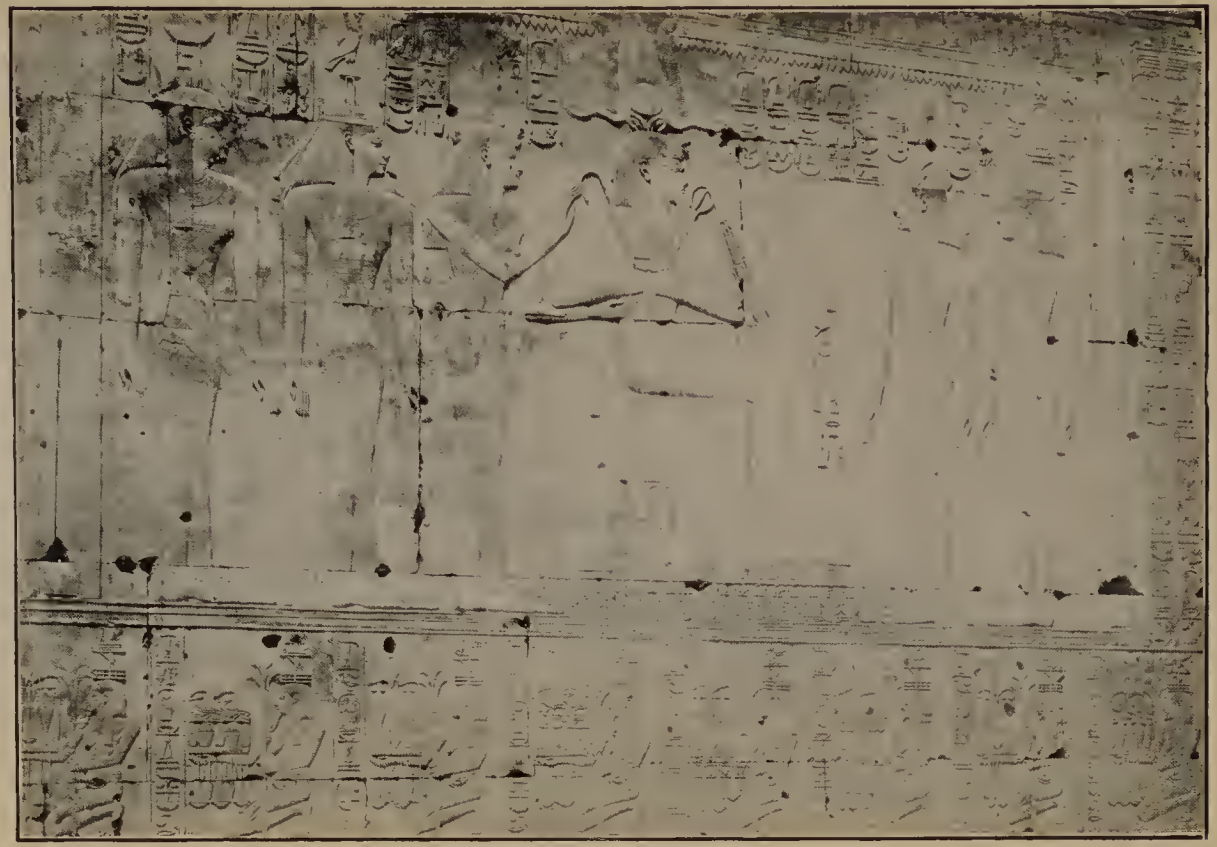
No matter what the trade was, or how wonderful its results, it seemed to the smug

scribe a contemptible thing in comparison with his own precious profession of letters. Here is his opinion of the craftsmen who created the miracles of metal- and wood-work of the Middle Kingdom :

> " I have never seen the smith as an ambassador,
> Or the goldsmith carry tidings ;
> But I have seen the smith at his work
> At the mouth of his furnace,
> His fingers were like crocodile skin,
> He stank more than the roe of fish . . .
> Each artist who works with the chisel
> Tires himself more than he who hoes a field.
> The wood is his field, of metal are his tools.
> In the night—is he free ?
> He works more than his arms are able,
> In the night—he lights a light."

No doubt this seemed very fine and humorous to our scribe ; but we who have the chance of comparing his literary achievement with the works of the craftsmen whom he satirised may be pardoned for preferring the diadems of Khnumit and Sat-Hathor, or the statues of Senusert and Amenemhat to all the paltry drivel he ever wrote.

Nor was his opinion of the soldier's calling any higher. Indeed the ancient Egyptian was no more of a warlike person than his successor the modern fellah, who makes a good enough soldier under British officers, but is about the most unmilitary person on earth when left to the freedom of his own will. There is no more curious inversion of fact than the common idea which pictures the Egyptian as one of the great



29. XIXth DYNASTY RELIEF-WORK, TEMPLE OF SETY I, ABYDOS.

warrior races of the world, and classes him along with that bloodthirsty tiger the Assyrian. Only at one period of his history did the Egyptian ever show the least sign of developing a craving for world-dominion and the warfare which goes along with it ; and when the brief imperial fever of his early XVIIIth Dynasty had wrought itself out, he reverted for the rest of his history to his natural rôle of the finest craftsman on earth, only bestirring himself when there was need to defend his frontiers, a business which he did fairly, but only fairly, well. On the whole, he would have thoroughly agreed with Alan Breck Stewart that war " is generally rather a bauchle of a business."

But it was reserved for the smug and flabby scribe—you can see him still in the Louvre with his cunning eyes and his rolls of unhealthy flesh—to make a mock of the calling which won for Egypt all the empire she ever possessed, and which was that of her greatest Pharaohs.

" Oh, what does it mean," says this early pacifist, " Oh, what does it mean that thou sayest : ' The officer has a better lot than the scribe ' ? Come, let me relate to thee the fate of the officer, so full of trouble." Then he goes on to relate in a fashion which he no doubt thinks humorous, the life of an officer on active duty in Syria :

" Come, let me relate to thee how he travels to Syria,
How he marches in the upland country.
His food and his water he has to carry on his arm,
Laden like a donkey ;
This makes his neck stiff like that of a donkey,

And the bones of his back break . . .
If he arrives in face of the enemy,
He is like a bird in a snare . . .
If he arrives at his home in Egypt . . .
He is ill, and must lie down.
They have to bring him home on the donkey,
Whilst his clothes are stolen, and his servants run away.
Therefore, O scribe,
Reverse thine opinion about the happiness of the scribe and of the officer."

As literature this precious effusion is merely contemptible; but it is very illuminating as to the character of the class which was responsible for the production of it. Generally speaking, the Egyptian leaves you with the pleasant impression that he is a decent kindly fellow, with a cheery outlook on life, and a love of pretty things and laughter; but the scribe is an undoubted fly in the ointment. He thought himself its finest perfume; but that is just precisely what makes him so unquestionably the fly.

We need not imagine that the condition either of the soldier or of the artisan was quite so miserable as the scribe would have us believe. The misfortune is that it was only the scribe who was vocal. If the soldier or the craftsman had been able to leave behind him his opinion of the scribe, it would probably have been quite as unflattering, and perhaps more pungently expressed. It would not have required great genius to make fun of a profession which lived by the favour of the great man, and whose typical figure is the kneeling scribe of the Cairo Museum, with his twisted deprecating smile, and his

submissively crossed hands, waiting, like a dog, uncertain whether his master will kick him or fling him a bone.

Behind all the glitter of the court and official circle, with its innumerable hangers-on, there comes the great mass of the people, the farmers, the skilled workmen, the shepherds, fishers, toilers of all sorts. Of no race in the world can it be said that the conditions of its workers have been so fully depicted as of the Egyptians. On the sculptured and painted tomb-reliefs we see the workmen of almost every trade under heaven busily engaged in the prosecution of their calling. Whatever the scribe might think of the indignity of being a smith or a carpenter, his impression was confined to himself, and the great man had not the least objection to see these and a score of other common occupations pictured on the walls of his " eternal habitation." But while the outward aspect of these callings is thus fully represented, so that it might be possible to produce a handbook of the Egyptian crafts, we are not so well informed as to the environment in which these wonderfully skilled workmen spent their lives, what were the conditions of their service, the manner of their housing, and the question of whether their lot was a happy one or not. Petrie's excavations at Kahun have given us the almost complete plan of an Old Kingdom workmen's town, where the skilled masons who were building the pyramid of Senusert II were housed. Though this is only a temporary town, we may probably take its conditions as more or less typical of those which prevailed for the

artisan class in the Old Kingdom. The houses are of all sizes, ranging from four rooms to sixty, the larger houses being, no doubt, those of the overseers and clerks of works. The streets are narrow, varying from 11 feet to 15 feet wide, and having a drain down the middle of each. The simplest type of small house has an open court opposite the entrance, a common room on one side, and two storerooms on the other, with a stair leading up to the roof. The larger class of artisan's house has a court, four rooms opening off it, and five other rooms dependent on the main rooms. On the whole, one would imagine that the housing conditions were not so very bad ; though certainly the houses were too crowded together. The average artisan's house of the present day has not the number of rooms which were possessed by the pyramid mason of four thousand years ago, though his advantages in other respects are considerable.

The workman's wages were at all events partly paid in kind. Herodotus tells us of the amount expended in provision for the workmen who built the Great Pyramid : " On the pyramid is shown an inscription, in Egyptian characters, how much was expended in radishes, onions, and garlic, for the workmen ; which the interpreter, as I well remember, reading the inscription, told me amounted to one thousand six hundred talents of silver." Payment was still in kind in the time of the New Empire. One of the foremen of the craftsmen of the Theban necropolis in the time of Ramses IX (1142-1123 B.C.), fortunately kept with great care a

30. XIXth DYNASTY RELIEF-WORK, TEMPLE OF RAMSES II, LUXOR.

record of all that happened to his gang, noting whether the men were on full work or were "idle." Festival days broke in considerably on their working time, as we hear of two full months' holiday, and again of another month, in the same year; but the workmen's rations ran on all the same whether they were working or not. The worry was that the rations were often behind time, and when that happened there was trouble. One month the rations were only one day late, but another they did not come at all, and then the workmen went on strike. This produced the supplies; but ere long the same thing happened again, and this time the gang went in a body to Thebes, and complained to the "great princes," and the "chief prophets of Amen." Again the result was good, and the journal of the carefu foreman gives us a quaint hint of how it had been necessary to use a little palm-oil in the case or the influential "fan-bearer" to secure the desired end. "We received to-day our corn-rations; we gave two boxes and a writing-tablet to the fan-bearer."

We cannot be sure whether the condition of the necropolis workmen, who were mostly skilled craftsmen, metal workers, carvers, painters, and so forth, was worse than that of the workmen in the city of the living; probably the conditions in both cases were much the same. In any case, it is the necropolis workmen who supply us with our instances of insufficient or delayed payment, and who give us the first historic examples of strikes. In the twenty-ninth year of Ramses III (1170 B.C.) things were pretty bad in the

necropolis, and wages had not been paid for half a year. After giving the officials nine days' grace, the workmen naturally went on strike in a body.

They left the necropolis, with their wives and children, and though the two overseers tried to entice them back to work " with great oaths," the workmen were not to be caught with chaff, and stayed outside the necropolis walls. Finally the affair assumed so threatening an aspect that two chiefs of police and a number of priests tried to make them return to duty ; but in vain. Their answer was, " We have been driven here by hunger and thirst, we have no clothes, we have no oil, we have no food. Write to our lord the Pharaoh on the subject, and write to the governor who is over us that they may give us something for our sustenance." This unheard-of request had its effect—" on that day they received the provision for the month Tybi." In another month, however, they were back again, as supplies had failed once more. This time the governor of the town met them, and though he asked them how he was to pay their wages when the storehouses were empty, he at least ordered that they should receive half of the overdue rations.

Altogether the evidence goes to show that life was not all pleasure in ancient Egypt, any more than in other lands ; but it is only fair to say that the other side of the matter has been grossly exaggerated, and that life in the Land of the Pharaohs was not the gloomy, morbid, perpetually death-contemplating thing which it has been represented as being. This idea, of

course, we owe, partly to the amiable Herodotus and his picture of the model coffin and mummy being carried round at all their banquets, with the words, "Look on this, then drink and enjoy yourself; for when dead you will be like this," and partly to the fact that practically all the knowledge we have of the Egyptians comes from their tombs.

The necessary corrective to this one-sided view of a great nation is given by their books, and particularly by the romantic fiction which they were the first nation to cultivate. Erman has said that "the romances are not to be relied upon; the country which they describe is not Egypt but fairyland." This may be so as regards scenery and detail; but the writer of the Tale of the Doomed Prince, or of Setna and the Magic Roll, whether he may cast the scene of his story in Naharina or in Egypt, cannot help revealing in his tale the habitual outlook on life of the Egypt of his time; and in this respect the romances are far more to be relied upon than either the vainglorious vauntings of a royal inscription or the carefully dressed-up moralisings of a scribe. The picture which they give of the Egyptian nature is that of a simple, kindly race, singularly free from the savage cruelty which disgraced their great rivals the Assyrians, loving pleasure, and all the brightness and beauty of life, with a straightforward and childlike affection, not greedy of power, but ready to live and let live, singularly advanced in their conception of family life, and especially worthy of our admiration in the respect which they paid to women, and

the position accorded to woman from the very earliest times.

It is time to rid our minds of that sinister conception of the Egyptian as a dark, uncanny, supernaturally wise and diabolically malignant being, which is still to be found in second-rate fiction, and in the vain imaginings of gropers in the occult and the miraculous, and to see this great race as it really was—a race of true children of the Sun, leading in the dawn of the world's story a clean, healthy, open-air life, with its own imperfections and weaknesses, but with its plain virtues as well, and with a moral standard not unworthy of comparison with that of any race in the world. What they have accomplished is plain for all the world to see; surely it is common sense to see also that such things were not the work of gloomy fanatics or of drivelling dabblers in the black arts, but of men.

We turn now to consider the art of ancient Egypt as it has now come to be known by the accumulation of specimens of it during the last century. Egyptian art has been somewhat slow in coming to its own in the judgment of the world, and that for two reasons. First that opinion, which had been accustomed to very different things, had to be gradually trained to appreciate the merit of work which differed from the accepted canons in many respects, even in the type of material which it used for its self-expression; and next, that the Egyptian work by which the national art was first introduced to the attention of the modern world was mostly of a period which we have now learned to know as decadent.

31. XXth DYNASTY RELIEF-WORK, TEMPLE OF RAMSES III, MEDINET HABU.

Denderah, Esneh, Edfu, Philæ, these were the products of Egyptian art which first roused the wonder of European visitors ; and very naturally, for these great shrines are not only wonderful in themselves, but are also in a state of preservation which renders them intelligible and attractive to everyone who sees them. But all the same they are very unworthy to be taken as examples of what Egyptian art could do at its best, and so we need not wonder that, when the first impulse of surprise had passed away, the voice of criticism was heard, pointing out the conspicuous faults in this claimant for recognition among the great arts of the world, and refusing to allow the claim. Similarly with the works of sculpture on which another part of the Egyptian claim must be based, in almost all cases the specimens of Egyptian sculpture which were first brought under the eyes of the judges were colossal fragments of a style and a period which had their own merits, but were far from being representative of the actual work of the Egyptian sculptor at its best, as we have now come to know it.

In these circumstances it is not to be wondered at that Egyptian art has only found slow and grudging recognition as one of the great arts of the world. What is strange, however, is that even to-day, when the periods of Egyptian architecture are as clearly defined, perhaps more clearly defined than the periods of Gothic, and when Egyptian sculpture is represented all over the world by either originals or reproductions of its best work in all respects, the judgment which was not unaccountable, or inapplicable in the

day of the beginnings of knowledge of things Egyptian should still be repeated, and Egyptian art be characterised as a thing, interesting indeed, but essentially crude and barbaric, the product of a race which has no claim to rank alongside the other great artistic races of the world.

Thus we find so learned an art critic as Lord Balcarres remarking (*Donatello*, p. 21), "The massive and abiding art of Egypt ignored the personality of its gods and Pharaohs, distinguishing the various persons by dress, ornament, and attribute." For the gods, this may pass, but when such a thing is said of the Pharaohs one can only say that it is simply the opposite of the truth. Is it possible that the author of such a statement had never seen, before he made it, such vivid impressions of personality as the great diorite Khafra, with its splendid dignity, or, at the opposite end of the scale, the Reisner Menkaura, the very embodiment of a bourgeois "Farmer George" royalty, doing his best to look as dignified as becomes the wearer of the double crown, and failing so absolutely? Here are two successive occupants of the Egyptian throne, whose personality, according to Lord Balcarres, should be ignored in Egyptian art, and yet the sharp discrimination of personality is just the thing that immediately strikes everyone who sees the two statues together.

Lord Balcarres, however, is not the only sinner in this respect. "The emptiness of the Sphinx's face," says Mr. March Phillipps in his charming book, *The Works of Man*, "is a prevailing trait in all Egyptian sculpture. All

Egyptian faces stare before them with the same blank regard which can be made to mean anything precisely because it means nothing. . . . The truth is, Egyptian sculpture is a sculpture barren of intellectual insight and intellectual interest."

Has the writer of this confident condemnation, one wonders, ever seen the granite Senusert III, either of the Cairo or of the British Museum, with the strong harsh features which express, if ever any work of the sculptor's hands expressed, both the pride and the bitter weariness of power, or, to take a New Empire instance, the masterful Thothmes III of the Cairo Museum, the face of a daring soldier, if there ever was one, or the ugly capable face of Prince Mentuemhat, also at Cairo? Mentuemhat has no claims to personal beauty, and, one imagines, no illusions on that matter; but strong character has seldom been more admirably expressed than in this specimen of the art which, as we are told, is "barren of intellectual insight and intellectual interest."

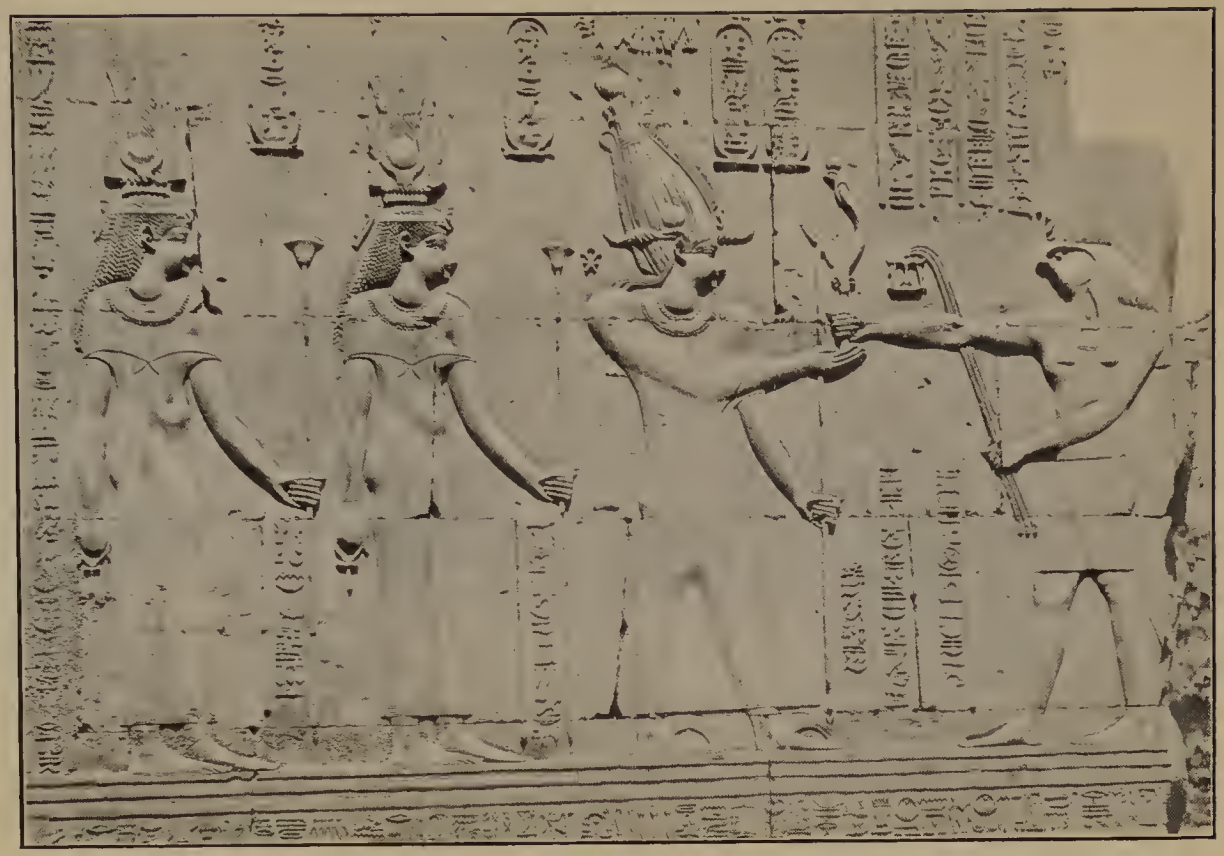
The fact is, that both these criticisms, and many others similar to them, rest upon a fundamental misconception about Egyptian sculpture. It is quite obvious that both Lord Balcarres and Mr. March Phillipps, in making them, are founding upon the colossal pieces of Egyptian sculpture which are the prominent objects in the galleries of our Museums, and taking them as adequately representative of the art which they are criticising; and to do this is hopelessly to misconceive the actual position.

Egyptian sculpture in the round had two

entirely different objects, which were reached by different methods, and are seen in different examples. The first was purely monumental and decorative, and its purposes are served by the production of the colossal statues, monuments of royal pride and glory, and, not less, pieces of decoration in a great architectural scheme. These gigantic works are not to be viewed as portraiture in the strict sense, and that the Egyptians themselves did not so view them is manifest from the fact that a reigning Pharaoh seldom hesitated to appropriate to himself any convenient statues of one of his predecessors by the simple process of cutting his own cartouche on the figure, and obliterating that of the original owner.

The question of likeness or unlikeness was a very small one; what was required was a figure which should convey the impression of power and dignity, linked with the name of a particular Pharaoh. In this respect, and as elements of an architectural whole, these statues unquestionably served their purpose; more was never expected of them, and to criticise them as lacking in expression, and in individuality, is to do them an injustice. They can only be judged as what they were designed to be, not as something radically different.

The position is quite different with regard to the other object of Egyptian sculpture, which was definitely portraiture. Apart from his monumental work, which in a limited sense may be said to have ideal elements in it, the Egyptian sculptor, unlike his successor, the Greek, produced



32. PTOLEMAIC RELIEF-WORK, KOM OMBOS.

no ideal work. He was simply and solely, from first to last, a portrait sculptor, and in this respect he has seldom been excelled. The whole object of his work was to produce a tomb-statue, which should be the refuge of the *Ka* of the dead man when his mummy had perished by lapse of time. Therefore the one condition of his art was that it should produce likenesses as absolute as the power of man could compass. The result of such an aim is manifest, both in the successes and in the limitations of Egyptian sculpture. In the one point to which he gave his whole strength, the sculptor scored, not always, of course, but in many instances, a most astonishing success. It is impossible to imagine anything more lifelike than the heads of some of the Old Kingdom statues—the Ti or the Ranefer of the Cairo Museum, or among royal statues, the Menkaura with the figures of the Nomes, or in later times the exquisite Berlin head of Queen Nefertiti, the astonishing ebony head of a royal princess of the same period, who may be Queen Tiy, or, to come down to still later days, the other head of Mentuemhat which Miss Benson and Miss Gourlay unearthed from the temple of Mut, or in the very latest days of Egyptian independence, the head of an unknown man in green schist which is now in the Berlin Museum. Until the rise of Roman portrait-sculpture, no ancient school of art presents anything to be compared with the realism of the ancient Egyptian sculptor.

Unfortunately for the completeness of his art, the absolute dominance of the need for

recognisable likeness in the head limited his work in other respects. So long as the head was a success, the rest of the body did not matter so much ; and consequently we have, even in such fine examples as the Ti and the Ranefer, a noble head joined to a body which is much less thoroughly studied, while in examples of poorer quality the contrast between the care with which the head is worked out and the rude blocking out of the torso and the extremities is almost ludicrous. Still, Egyptian art, like all art, is entitled to be judged by its best, and not, as has so often been done, by its worst ; and even when we admit all its limitations the fact remains that to charge it with incapacity to interpret individuality is, to anyone who is familiar with its best work, merely ridiculous.

The case is the same when we turn to the criticisms which have been directed against the other great branch of Egyptian sculpture—its relief-work. The great reliefs of the temples, with their battle pictures and scenes of offerings, are what at once commands the attention and invites the criticism. We are told, and very justly so far, that " Kings, gods, prisoners, the smiting champion, and the transfixed victim are all equally expressionless. Clearly the idea that art can be charged with, and visibly body forth, the emotions and ideas of the human mind was never grasped by Egyptian sculptors " ; but who in the world ever dreamed of taking the vast advertisements of the glory and valour of Pharaoh, for that is what the battle reliefs of Karnak and Medinet Habu are—contract work,

at so much the square yard—as fair representatives of the delicate and most decorative work which has given us the tomb-reliefs of the Old Kingdom ?

In some respects Egyptian relief-work is decidedly inferior to the remarkable animal sculpture with which the Assyrian kings decorated their palaces. The Egyptian sculptor rarely attempts anything like the difficulty of the problems of motion which the Assyrian tackled with such dash and light-heartedness, and when he does make the attempt his work is apt to seem stiff beside that of his rival, whose hunting scenes have rarely been equalled ; but in his portrayal of quiet scenes of home, field, and farmyard the Egyptian comes to his own again, and it is difficult to imagine anything more effective as wall decoration than his quiet and unstrained work, which, unlike that of the bitter Assyrian, almost invariably leaves a pleasant impression on the mind.

The comprehension and appreciation of Egyptian architecture has been hindered by the same fact which has delayed the appreciation of the art of the Nile Valley—namely, that the specimens of it which are to-day the most complete, and which command for that reason most attention, belong, not to the days when Egypt was at the summit of her achievement in all respects, but to periods when taste and artistic feeling were decaying along with power. To take, as is often done, such a temple as Medinet Habu as fairly representative of Egyptian architecture, is simply to make adequate appreciation

of what Egyptian architecture is a thing impossible. The Egyptian builders had, no doubt, great faults, which have already been touched upon. They were often, indeed almost always, strangely careless about the very factors which should ensure the "eternal duration" which they craved for the works of their hands; they had, generally speaking, comparatively little of that exquisite sense of proportion which makes a fine Greek temple seem a thing inevitable, though sometimes, as at Der el-Bahri, and the little temple of Amenhotep III at Elephantine, now, alas, destroyed, something of this was revealed to them; they sometimes mistook mere mass for greatness, and the multiplication of forms for beauty, as in the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak, where a magnificent opportunity was lost because the architect did not know that too much is too much. But with it all they have left us a heritage of which it can safely be said that few of the works of man can surpass it in impressiveness. "It is a part of my intention," says Mr. Lethaby (*Architecture*, pp. 65, 66), "to try to point out what contributions were made to universal architecture by the several civilisations as they arose and passed away, but to do so of Egypt would be practically to rewrite what has been said; to a large degree Architecture is an Egyptian art."

The nation of which such a statement can be made needs no further witness as to its place among the great master-building nations of the world's history.

Whatever hesitations and doubts there may

be as to the right of the ancient Egyptian to rank high among the artistic nations of the world, there can be none as to his place as a craftsman. In prehistoric days he was already the finest flint-worker that the world has ever known, so that his flint knives are to this day the standards by which all other similar work falls to be tested, and in presence of which it always comes short ; while his vessels of hard stone were shaped, with a skill and a patience which to us seem little short of marvellous, into shapes of grace and beauty which have never been surpassed by the workers of any land or time. Later he translated these into fine pottery, and was always a skilful and satisfying potter, though his work never perhaps attained the grace and beauty of that of his brother craftsman over the sea in Crete. His greatest gift to us in this respect was his development of the art of covering pottery of all kinds with the exquisite glazes which still charm us on scarabs, amulets, ushabti figures, and all sorts of vessels.

As a linen worker, of course, he was incomparable, and the finest specimens of modern linen look wretchedly coarse when viewed under a microscope alongside the best products of his loom. The earliest jewellery of the world was of his workmanship, and the bracelets of the Ist Dynasty queen found at Abydos show us that the Egyptian jeweller of six thousand years ago needed no lessons from any of the most skilled modern practitioners of the crafts. Indeed, all through the history of the land the craftsmanship of the goldsmith was beyond reproach. In the

later periods his design was much inferior to the happy inspirations of the morning of art, though his technique was fairly well maintained to the end; but in the best days of the craft, which pretty closely correspond to the best days of the history, design and technique were alike admirable.

Anything finer in their own way than the diadems of Khnumit, the royal crown, or the pectorals of the Lahun treasure, it is impossible to imagine, while if the standard of the furniture in the tomb of Tutankhamen is maintained by the jewellery, we may look for evidence from this source that the skill of the craftsman had not degenerated in the interval between the Middle Kingdom and the New Empire.

With regard to woodwork, the evidence of the furniture which has been found in the tombs is conclusive both as to the skilful and sound design of the Egyptian cabinet-maker, and as to his careful and accurate workmanship. The chairs, the coffers, and the couches from the tomb of Yuaa and Tuau are delightful to the eye, with their simple and sensible lines, and suggest that they would be equally satisfactory in use. The wonders which have been disclosed in the tomb of Tutankhamen have already been discussed in their own place, so far as that is possible at present, and while they reveal nothing new, save the ugly and clumsy state couches, whose provenance has been also discussed, they show an amount of richness in detail and material for which even previous discoveries had scarcely prepared us.

Professor Petrie tells us that structurally the work of the Egyptian joiner was as good as it was satisfying to the eye, and the state in which his works have come down to us through so many centuries bears witness to the soundness of the materials which he used, and of the work which he put out upon them ; and perhaps the carefully moderate estimate of so great an expert is more impressive as to the quality of Egyptian craftsmanship than the multiplication of superlatives would be. "The powerful technical skill of Egyptian art, its good sense of limitations, and its true feeling for harmony and expression, will always make it of the first importance to the countries of the West with which it was so early and so long connected."

In sum the debt which the modern world owes to the culture of ancient Egypt is no small one. We owe to Egypt the first book, the first building, the first ship, the first statue, the first romance, the first relief, and the first picture, in the modern sense, of which we have any knowledge ; and if some of these anticipations are crude and primitive, and show but little sign of the wonderful development of which the future was to prove them capable, yet it is only due to this pioneer nation to remember that it is to her that we owe the seed which has borne so manifold a harvest.

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